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"I believed,  
and therefore have  
I spoken"  
2 Cor. 4:13

## A Call For Loyalty

**D**URING the first days of 1973 a group of its concerned members addressed an appeal to Missouri's clergy to gather signatures in support of the Preus *Statement* which, according to the group's letter, "now belongs to the church."

This group of 34 includes several of Missouri's vice-presidents, a lay member of Synod's Board of Directors, a number of Missouri's district presidents, the president of both our Springfield Seminary and our Ann Arbor College, members of the Boards of Control of various Missouri schools, professors at these schools, other synodical officials and clergy as well as a number of the church's prominent laymen.

Dr. Walter A. Maier, who signed the *Crossroads* letter on behalf of this group, indicated that the sponsors of the appeal had to limit sponsoring signatures, for practical reasons, to a representative group of Missourians; many hundreds more would gladly have endorsed the appeal to all Missouri's clergy, congregations, and laymen to express their loyalty to Biblical teachings.

The *Crossroads* group sees its goal as giving help to "a synod-wide effort to (1) stand behind the president in his endeavor to urge faithful adherence to the truth of God's Word in our church body; (2) declare our acceptance of *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* as a valid and necessary response to the issues which are troubling our church today and (3) urge the president and all others in a position of doctrinal supervision to initiate whatever additional action may be necessary to maintain the preaching and teaching of God's Word in its truth and purity in our midst."

**I**T urges Missourians to "rise up now and offer some tangible support to Dr.

Preus in his concern for safeguarding the spiritual welfare of Synod . . ." and notes that the President points out "that we now stand at a crossroads" and must decide which way Missouri shall go. The sponsors of the *Crossroads* letter reply that Missouri should not go down "the broad road of theological confusion and religious liberalism that so many denominations have followed," but remain faithful to the Word, the Confessions and such currently necessary declarations as the *Statement*.

It calls this document "an excellent, clear, and timely declaration of many genuinely Lutheran beliefs concerning the topics, which it treats."

In the key sentence of its action appeal, *Crossroads* asks, "If out of love for the Lord Jesus, His Gospel and the Scriptures, and together with your pastor you wish to participate in this effort, *we invite you to affix your signature* to this letter . . ."

The *Crossroads* group hopes that tens of thousands of laymen and laywomen will join their pastors in this nation-wide effort to make visible the basic grass-roots loyalty to our Lord which pervades the whole church.

*Crossroads* has also included all of Missouri's male teachers in this mailing.

*Affirm's* Editorial Group fully endorses this effort to give the men and women of our church, in addition to its pastors, an opportunity to express their own persuasions on the most crucial issue Missouri has faced since its founding 125 years ago.

If you want further information about this appeal or copies of it to use in your congregation, please write *Crossroads*, P.O. Box 3641, Springfield, Illinois 62703.

And please remember *Crossroads* in your prayers!

# The Historical-Critical Method and Genesis 1 and 2

THE Historical-Critical Method is being described in Lutheran circles as a method which brings out the riches embedded in the Holy Scriptures more effectively than the historical grammatical method, in vogue since the Reformation. Present-day practitioners of the Historical-Critical Method use various types of criticism, including literary and content criticism.

During the eighteenth century there developed a type of literary criticism that rejected the Mosaic authorship and questioned the facts of narratives found in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges and I Samuel. It took about a hundred years before a Four-Source Documentary Hypotheses was worked out. According to this theory the first six books of the Old Testament were woven together out of at least four primary written documents. These are: a J source (written about 850 B.C.), an E source (composed about 750 B.C.), a D source (written sometime before 635 B.C.) and a P source (composed about 450 B.C.). The J source originated in the southern kingdom (Judah), while the E source came from the northern kingdom. A reading of Wellhausen's *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, greatly responsible for spreading the views of German literary criticism, shows that he rejected many Old Testament books as history. He placed the prophets before the priests and completely reversed the Biblical order of events.

While Old Testament criticism has adopted many new views about the development of the books of the Old Testament and has added form and redaction criticisms, it still generally believes that the Pentateuch (Five Books of Moses) was put together out of various documents by what appears to be a "scissors-and-paste" method. Since neither Jews nor Christians had any knowledge whatever of the existence of supposed J, E, D and P sources, the question arises: "How did scholars recognize the four 'primary' documents?"

THOSE who dissect the Pentateuch claim the following clues enable them to distinguish the four documents: 1. the use of different Hebrew names for God, either Yahweh or Elohim, at least until Exodus 6:2, 3; 2. the existence of contradictory accounts of the same event; 3. the employment of a different style and vocabulary in each source; and 4. differing theologies set forth in the four sources.

These critics, for instance, claim we have contradictory accounts about creation, the flood, events in Abraham's, Isaac's, Jacob's, and Joseph's lives. Supposedly we are confronted with two contradictory versions as to how Joseph was sold into Egypt. To support the view of the multiple authorship of the Five Books of Moses, the critics create contradictions where they do not exist. This means, of course, that they reject the reliability of the Scriptures and regard the Bible a Book which is errant, has many mistakes and contradictions.

According to these scholars contradictory stories at the very beginning of the Bible face the reader. Genesis 1:1-2:4a supposedly comes from the latest of the four sources, the P document, while Genesis 2:4b-25, from the J source, relates a different version of creation and forces the reader to ask: "What is correct? The two chapters disagree on a number of details—need we accept either of them?"

Critical scholars claim the differences between the two accounts are these:

## Chapter 1:1-2:4a (from P)

1. The original state of the universe is a watery chaos
2. The work of creation is assigned to Elohim (God) and is divided into six separate operations, each belonging to one day

## Chapter 2:4b-2:25 (from J)

1. The original state of the universe is a waterless waste
2. The work of creation is assigned to Yahweh Elohim and no note of time is given

## The Order of Creation

1. Light
2. The firmament
3. The dry land-earth, separation of earth from the sea
4. Vegetation—three orders
5. Animals and man, male and female created together

## The Order of Creation

1. Man, made out of the dust
2. The garden to the east of Eden
3. Trees of every kind, including the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil
4. Animals and birds (no mention of fish)

THESE two "contradictory" accounts, the critics imagine, place the reader in the difficult position of not knowing what God really wanted to convey by them. Many Old Testament scholars contend that the data for these versions were borrowed from a Babylonian epic, which the Hebrew writers supposedly purged of its polytheism and worship of the heavenly bodies. In Genesis 1 and 2, therefore, the critics say, we do not have a divine revelation of what happened at the beginning of human history—but only what Israel, at different times in its history, believed had happened.

Scholars, both critical and conservative, agree that the book of Genesis has a structure. Its fifty chapters are organized around the phrase: "These are the generations of . . ." (in Hebrew "elleh toledoth"). The word *toledoth* (generations) means "offspring," "family history in its origins," "descendants." This phrase occurs eleven times between Genesis 2:4 and 37:1. After Moses has described the creation of the cosmos (1:1), the creation of the earth (1:2), the creation of plants, animals and human life, toward the end of the creation account he tells his readers "that God ceased from all his labors which he had done." Beginning with 2:4 Moses starts to use the phrase: "These are the *toledoth* of the heavens and the earth." Moses proceeds to describe the offspring of the *earth*, Adam who was made from the "dust of the ground" (2:7) and Eve, created from a rib of man, and thus ultimately, because she had been taken from Adam's body, she too is taken from the earth.

While in Genesis 1:27 Moses states that on the sixth day God created male and female, in chapter 2:4ff., he describes in more detail how Adam and Eve were made by God. When no suitable partner for Adam could be found among the

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# Honesty Is The Best Policy

I want to commend Dr. Paul Bretscher for his honesty in forthrightly stating the position of the "new theology" in the Missouri Synod. Usually in the past, at least publicly, liberals claimed that they were simply restating in contemporary terms the historic doctrines of Synod and Lutheranism, in order to make them relevant to modern man. They claimed that the Missouri Synod need not be monolithic in stating its theology and that what they (the liberals) believed was the creed of the Lutheran Confessions and Missouri Synod restated in contemporary language. According to Dr. Bretscher, however, this is not true. The liberal theological position radically differs from what Missouri, classical Lutheran theologians, and Martin Luther himself have believed.

In an article in the November issue of the *Concordia Theological Monthly*, entitled *The Log in Your Eye*, Dr. Bretscher offers us a 41-page resumé of liberal theology. I want to commend him for this breath of fresh air, this honesty from the "left." Until now few such breezes of candidness have come from that direction. And now that the issues are out in the open, we can really get down to discussing, debating and studying them; we need not stay mired down in procedural wrangles and propaganda tricks. Honesty is the best policy!

## Gospel Reductionism

What Dr. Bretscher says in his article sounds very much like Gospel reductionism. Gospel reductionism reduces the authoritative Word of God to only the Gospel, claiming that only the Gospel is to be considered authoritative and "inerrant" and that the rest of Scripture may contain discrepancies, mistakes and untruths. By "Gospel" he means the statements of God's grace in contrast to the threats of God's law. Gospel reductionism holds that only these statements about God's grace need be understood to be inspired, that not "all Scripture," but only its "Gospel," was given by inspiration of God.

That position, of course, stands in direct contradiction to the history of Christendom and the Lutheran Confessions. It is contrary to what Luther believed and to what the Missouri Synod has always held. In fact, it was in order to maintain our historic Lutheran beliefs against such fearful "rationalism" that the Saxons left Germany for America and founded Synod. Dr. Bretscher demonstrates the fact that he favors a new and different doctrinal position to replace this historic Lutheran theology. For a long time many of us have charged the liberals with this. It is refreshing to find that one of them now admits it and shows that our analysis has been factual. Thank you, Dr. Bretscher!

This writer claims that the historic position of our church "perverts Scripture and the Confessions, robs Christ of His honor, and seduces consciences with a false comfort;"<sup>1</sup> that he is using a different basis of authority for his theology or that his "is not the same authority principle as the traditional one of the Bible's inspiration."<sup>2</sup> Let me quote from one paragraph of Bretscher's article to demonstrate:

We have seen how our orthodox fathers were somehow derailed. Two possible authority principles carried through in the Lutheran Reformation. The one was . . . the authority of the Bible as the in-

spired and inerrant Word of God. The other was . . . the authority of the Gospel . . . The reformation itself did not really sort out the new authority from the old. Somehow it was the old stream which in the end swept orthodoxy with it and supplied the foundation of its theological system.<sup>3</sup>

He further claims that the orthodox fathers, including Luther, uncritically accepted the doctrine of inspiration simply because it was *there*, in the tradition of the church. It belonged to their religious and cultural heritage. In the piety of their time they accepted it, as Luther had, without finding occasion to evaluate either the principle itself or the use they made of it.<sup>4</sup>

And Bretscher does not accept this principle, for he says: "But now the Lord has forced us to see the distinction clearly . . . What would it be like to build systematic theology on 'Gospel principle' . . . ? It would be an altogether different style of systematic theology."<sup>5</sup> After almost 2,000 years, the Lord only now forces us into a new doctrinal system—that is indeed a candid admission! Thank you, Dr. Bretscher!

## History Writing

Bretscher shows at length that he himself has adopted the rationalism of the philosopher Immanuel Kant (died 1804). On this basis he builds his "new theology." He approvingly summarizes some of Kant's ideas which, he claims, are the foundation of the "scientific" approach of modern man. He further claims that, as a result of Kant's criticism and on the basis of Kant's assumptions, we are forced to change our theology. He says: "It belonged to the very nature of the scientific mind to suspect traditional assumptions . . . and to challenge any 'truth' which depended on some hallowed 'authority' . . . Critical thinkers . . . expose the premise of the Bible's perfection and infallibility to ridicule."<sup>6</sup> From Kant, then, he develops his own idea of history; he regards Biblical history as just like secular history. The secular historian assumes that all the events of the past have only human or natural causes and he especially excludes God's acts as explaining history. The Christian historian, on the other hand, starts with the assumption that all Scripture is given by the unique, non-natural, miraculous intervention of God and so differs from all other history. If he starts with Kant and so-called "scientific" thought rather than with God's revelation, a thinker will obviously come to different conclusions and different doctrines. This is the source of the "new theology." It is not the Scriptures but human philosophy—what Luther disparagingly referred to as "Dame reason." Is it any wonder that the "new theology"—starting from such a strange point in space and time and thought—has come up with altogether different doctrines?

It is on the basis of Kant's assumptions that Bretscher claims it proper to use the Historical-Critical Method of interpreting the Word of God, the method which, as Robinson-Cobb so candidly state, "has provided a herme-

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<sup>1</sup> Paul G. Bretscher, "The Log In Your Own Eye," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. XLIII (Nov., 1972), p. 664.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 669.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 683.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 676.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 683.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 618.

# Fact Finding

ON September 8, 1972, Dr. John Tietjen mailed to the pastors of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod a document titled *Fact Finding or Fault Finding?* A sub-title indicates that this document was intended to be an analysis of the Synodical President's investigation of the St. Louis Seminary.

Dr. Tietjen's document turns out to be an analysis of a preliminary report submitted to Dr. Preus by the Fact Finding Committee, which Dr. Preus subsequently submitted to the Board of Control of the St. Louis Seminary. Since this initial report was never published and distributed throughout Synod, Dr. Tietjen's document is a response to a report most people have never seen. It is actually a response to the Fact Finding Committee's report and not to the Report of the Synodical President published September 1, 1972.

This circumstance makes it extremely difficult to evaluate Dr. Tietjen's document as a response to the Report of the Synodical President since it is, in fact, not that. Nevertheless, Dr. Tietjen's document bears careful examination quite apart from its merits as a response to another document.

## Unfairness Charges Examined

Part I of the Tietjen document is titled, "General Analysis of the Seminary Investigation." It contains five sections, the first three of which charge the President of Synod and the Fact Finding Committee with *prejudice, with using faulty procedures, and with distorting faculty positions.*

Dr. Tietjen nowhere makes clear how he knows this, but he claims that the investigation of the St. Louis Seminary was conducted on the presumption of guilt. As Dr. Tietjen himself admits, the stated objective of the investigation was to ascertain facts for the purpose of protecting the Seminary against unfounded criticisms. Unless Dr. Tietjen is able to read hearts, by what right does he accuse the committee of having a "hidden agenda"? Unless Dr. Tietjen is able convincingly to refute the findings of the committee, he will hardly persuade anyone that the investigators were prejudiced and that the President's Report was unfair. If the findings of the Committee show that some criticisms of the St. Louis Seminary are in fact founded, these findings cannot be dismissed by simply asserting that the Committee expected to come upon such findings at the outset. Even if that were the case, it would not automatically invalidate the Committee's report. It would still need to be proved that the report actually distorts and misrepresents the situation at the St. Louis Seminary.

DR. Tietjen feels that the "prejudicial nature of the inquiry is evident also in the composition of the Committee President Preus appointed to carry out the inquiry." He faults President Preus for appointing men "who have the greatest degree of doctrinal concern." *Does a man's concern for doctrine disqualify him for the work of investigating the doctrine being taught at a seminary?* One might as well argue that an inspector with great concern for cleanliness is not qualified to examine a restaurant to see if it meets established standards! Would Dr. Tietjen rather have the Seminary inspected by men with little or no doctrinal concern?

With respect to the *allegations of prejudice, faulty procedures, and distortions* in the President's Report, it must be remembered that "the transcripts are the definitive report." Dr. Tietjen himself acknowledges that "the transcripts at least present the position of a faculty member as he himself

articulated it and in the context of the actual question he was asked." In view of this concession it was eminently fair of the President to include the transcripts in his Report so that everyone would be able to read firsthand what faculty members said, and to decide for himself whether or not the Committee's evaluation was reliable.

Dr. Tietjen complains that "in the fact finding procedures the members of the faculty were invited to testify against themselves and to provide the president of Synod with the proof needed to condemn them." *The faculty members were not invited to testify against themselves, but for themselves.* They were asked simply to state their position on several issues which are presently in controversy. Whether the testimony turned out to be evidence of guilt or proof of innocence depended entirely on the nature of the testimony. Certainly, the faculty members were aware that an investigation was being held for the very purpose of giving them an opportunity to speak for themselves and to clear up any misunderstandings that might exist about their individual and corporate viewpoints. If their own integrity forced them to express opinions not in accord with the position of Synod, they can blame no one but themselves. *In full knowledge of the purpose of the interviews, and of their own free will, the members of the faculty responded to questions in their own words in their own way.* As mature theologians and teachers in the church, they must assume responsibility for their statements.

## Is Preus Unscriptural and Un-Lutheran?

But Part I of Dr. Tietjen's response to the President's Report contains more serious matters. Sections 4 and 5 of Part I attempt to show that President Preus and the Fact Finding Committee hold "a view of Scripture that is less than Scriptural" and "a theology less than Lutheran."

These are serious charges, and they need to be examined especially because they are directed against the President of Synod by the President of one of Synod's seminaries. The gravity of this situation has been intensified by another development. The view of Scripture and the theology in terms of which the Committee evaluated the theological position of the faculty is that which the President of Synod in consultation with the Vice-Presidents, set forth in March, 1972, in a document titled *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles.* This document which was written to aid the committee in its work has been read and examined by the members of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations and declared by the Commission to be in doctrinal accord with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions and the position of Synod. *Dr. Tietjen's charge that the Committee conducted its investigation on the basis of a view of Scripture that is less than Scriptural and on the basis of a theology that is less than Lutheran has now become an indictment also of the theological position of the CTRC and of the position which, in the Commission's judgment, is that of Synod, the Confessions and the Scriptures themselves!*

THE Fact Finding Committee is accused of not understanding the significance of the distinction between Law and Gospel for Lutheran Scriptural interpretation. What is more probably the case, the Committee did not agree with the faculty's understanding of the significance of the distinction between Law and Gospel for Biblical interpretation. The

# Finding?

Committee's understanding of this matter is in full accord with the following recent statement of the CTCR:

When Melancthon emphasized that the distinction between Law and Gospel is fundamental to a correct understanding of the Scriptures, he at once indicated the passages to which this rule specifically applies. He said: "The rule I have just stated interprets all the passages they quote on law and works." (Apology IV:185)

A rule intended to prevent misinterpretation of those passages of Scripture which urge good works ought not to be invoked to permit latitude in interpreting passages that deal with other subjects. Particularly, Melancthon's rule must not be changed to read: "Since it is the primary purpose of the Scriptures to proclaim Law and Gospel, the only legitimate question to address to a Biblical pericope is: 'How can the text be used to confront the sinner with God's judgment and mercy?' " *It is an abuse of Melancthon's rule when it is interpreted to mean that as long as Law and Gospel are proclaimed, the Bible student may regard and treat the Sacred Scriptures as though they were historically conditioned human writings which contain conflicting traditions and diverse theologies from which no absolutely reliable historical information or permanently valid doctrine can be derived.*

No doubt Dr. Tietjen would say that also this CTCR statement "reflects a lack of understanding" about the significance of the Law/Gospel distinction for interpreting Scripture.

When Dr. Tietjen says that "the Gospel is not at the center of theology of the Report" issued by the President of Synod, he most probably means that the Report does not understand the hermeneutical function of the Gospel the way he does. That may be—but the Committee has in its favor also the following statement of the CTCR:

According to the Lutheran symbols the Gospel is the center of Scriptures. For that reason they see everything in the Scriptures as related to the Gospel in such a way that they can say: "Everything in the Word of God is written down for us . . . in order that 'by steadfastness, by the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope' (Romans 15:4)" (Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration XI:12).

Because all of Scripture is God's Word written down for us that we might have hope, the symbols say, "It is certain that any interpretation of the Scriptures which weakens or even remove this comfort and hope is contrary to the Holy Spirit's will and intent" (Ibid., XI:92).

Relative to the role of the Gospel as norm in the Scriptures, however, it is important to observe that it is one thing to say that it is contrary to the Holy Spirit's intent when Scripture is interpreted in such a way that the Gospel is obscured; it is quite another thing to say that since the Holy Spirit's intent in the Scriptures is to proclaim the Gospel, it was never His intent that His Word in Genesis 1-11, for instance, should be understood as relating facts of history, or to say that in view of "the perpetual aim of the Gospel" (Augsburg Confession XXVIII: 66—

Latin) apostolic directives for the Church's life may be set aside. *It is one thing to search the Scriptures to discover ever more fully how they witness to Christ and relate to His Gospel; it is quite another thing to explore the implications of the Gospel for freedom in handling the Scriptures.* The interest of one is to see the richness and the glory of the Gospel to aid preaching; the interest of the other is to explain the alleged limitations and flaws of the Bible in a way that avoids the embarrassment of defending it as God's very own inerrant Word while at the same time upholding and affirming its authority.

Dr. Tietjen chides the Committee for having a limited understanding of the nature of exegesis and of the Historical-Critical Method. He is plainly playing with words when, in defense of the method, he says it "does not postulate non-historicity or conflicting accounts of conflicting theologies." Technically, of course, it is true that the Historical-Critical Method does not postulate, that is, assume in advance without evidence, that there are such things in the Bible. But Dr. Tietjen omits to mention that those who use this method claim that they actually discover conflicting accounts and theologies in the Bible, and that anyone who uses this method must in principle expect to find such conflicts. He fails to point out that the use of this method invariably leads to the conclusion, allegedly based on irrefutable evidence, that there are conflicts in the Bible, and that then this "conclusion" does in fact become a "presupposition" for Bible study. *Whether the view that there are conflicts in the Bible is called a postulate, presupposition, or conclusion, the end result is the same—exegets who use the historical method are convinced that in order to study the Bible "on its own terms" (i.e. as a product of history) they must take into account its "historical dimension" (i.e. the historical-conditionedness that is bound to result in discrepant reports and theological pluralism).*

The fact is that Dr. Tietjen feels constrained to warn the church against people who hold to the "complete inerrancy" of Scripture because they operate "with a view of the Bible, inspiration, and history that is very dangerous." In his judgment such people will not let the Bible be the kind of book God gave us, for they apply "to the Bible as a criterion a concept of what it ought to be that contradicts what in matter of fact it is." He thinks that efforts to harmonize "differences away is to find fault with the Scriptures as God gave them to us" and "come close to denying one of the great positive contributions of the doctrine of verbal inspiration, that even the differences in the Bible are given by the Holy Spirit." He holds that these "differences" have "preaching and evangelistic values." And it must be noted that the "differences" he has in mind are of the sort that contradict the view that the Bible is inerrant.

Dr. Tietjen claims that a legalistic view of the authority of Scripture dominates the theology of the President's Report. He says such a thing only because he himself is confused and does not make a simple but necessary distinction. He does not distinguish between the question, "How does a person

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## Honesty . . . (Continued from Page 3)

neutical principle for the acceptance of critical positions that would otherwise have been dogmatically inadmissible."<sup>7</sup> This is the method the liberal theologians have used in the process of radically changing Lutheran theology to something which does not agree with Luther or the Lutheran Confessions.

### Unionism

In his final section, Bretscher makes an impassioned appeal for the "new theology" because it will bring unity to the church. With this theological approach, Bretscher finds himself stating, "We need not fear contamination with deadly germs of false doctrine."<sup>8</sup> We can tolerate the false prophet as well as the orthodox brother; we can ignore our Lord's warnings against false teachers and the Apostles' advice to "avoid them." But, I submit, the Bretscher position contradicts the whole history of Christendom, as Werner Elert has so clearly shown in his pages on the Eucharist.<sup>9</sup> Luther and the Church of the Reformation were able to maintain the Gospel only because they heeded our Lord's injunction to withstand and reject all religious teachings except those delivered to us in God's Word. The unionism without agreement in doctrine Bretscher advocates is simply contrary to the Holy Scriptures and in opposition to the whole Christian tradition up to the time of Luther, contrary to the position of Lutheran Confessions and of Lutheran orthodoxy ever since that time, and it is contrary to Article VI, 2 of the Constitution of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

This is indeed a different spirit and a different doctrine than we have ever found in Synod. Again, I want to thank Dr. Bretscher for enlightening us on this matter, so that all of us now clearly see and agree about the problem troubling our church. I am sure that such honesty will prove to be the best policy for our church too. Dr. Bretscher, the church is indebted to you for being so candid!

The Rev. Marcus Lang, Pastor  
St. James Lutheran Church  
Lafayette, Indiana

<sup>7</sup> James M. Robinson and John B. Cobb, Jr., *The New Hermeneutic* (New York: Harper & Row), p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 685.

<sup>9</sup> Werner, Elert, *Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966).

### Tapes Available

A new tape recording, including statements by President J. A. O. Preus, Dr. David Scaer, Dr. Raymond Surburg, President Richard Schultz and Dr. Eugene Klug, deals with the grave issues facing Synod, its seminaries, the investigation by the Fact-Finding Committee, higher criticism and other crucial matters. Lasting ninety minutes, this recording will help you understand the problems our church today has. The tape can be purchased at a cost of \$6.00.

Other tapes still available focus on specific subjects: the ordination of women into the public ministry, a recording by Professor David Scaer, and the Historical-Critical Method, a recording by Dr. Robert Preus. These two tapes, which can be yours without cost to you, last about thirty minutes. A donation for them will be appreciated.

For these tapes write Mr. Alfred Tessmann, 13761 Joyce Drive, Largo, Florida 33540.

## Historical-Critical Method

(Continued from Page 2)

animals God had created, the Almighty determined to give him a helpmeet of his own flesh and blood, with whom he could converse and reason.

CHAPTER 2:4-25 is not a second and contradictory creation account. Instead, it describes in detail how our first parents were brought into existence, placed in a garden, known as Eden, and the circumstances under which they might permanently remain there. If chapter 2:4-25 is a second creation account, it fails to tell us anything about the cosmic creation, the creation of light, the separation of water from land, the firmament, and the manner in which land, sea and marine animals were brought into existence. Moreover, it has no statement about what happened on the various creation days. If Genesis 2:4-25 is a second creation account it is very deficient and disappointing. It was never intended, however, to be such a second account, different in important details from Genesis 1:1-2:3. Moses rather there desires to show how the earth was prepared for man and how man in the Garden began his history. Without this narrative the reader could not understand chapter 3, the record of the fall into sin by Eve and Adam.

Stolee, in distinguishing the two chapters, aptly wrote: "In chapter one we have the *order* of creation, in chapter two the *purpose* of creation. First we see that man should have dominion, or rule, over everything on the earth, and then we learn that man should serve and enjoy fellowship with God: be God's representative. Thus chapter two gives us the details as to wherefore man was placed on earth, and how man is related to God."

The literary criticism which took form in the eighteenth century and has ever since been a vogue makes of the sacred Word of God a book with all the errors and contradictions found in human documents.

Dr. Raymond F. Surburg  
Concordia Seminary  
Springfield, Illinois

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**Fact Finding . . .** (Continued from Page 5)

come to faith in the Bible's Gospel?" and the question, "What gives the Bible its authority as norm of doctrine?" To the first question the Committee's answer would most certainly be: "A person comes to faith in the Bible's Gospel in no other way than through the gracious operation of God's Holy Spirit. This faith is not coerced by legislation, but bestowed as a gift." To the second question the Committee's answer would be: "The Bible has authority as the norm of doctrine because it is the Word of God to which the Church must be obedient in all that it teaches in God's name." Luther can think of no greater abuse of God's name than "when false preachers arise and peddle their lying nonsense as the Word of God" (*Lutheran Confessions* Part I:54). The *Formula of Concord* says: "In his Word He (Christ) has revealed to us as much as we need to know in this life, and wherever the scriptures . . . give us clear, certain testimony, we must simply believe it and not argue" (*Solid Declaration* VIII:53). The question, "Why do men believe the Bible?" and the question, "Why should men believe the Bible?" are not one and the same question. There is an exact parallel here to what the symbols teach with respect to good works. To the question, "Why do men do good works?", the symbols answer: "When the heart is encouraged and quickened by faith . . . it receives the Holy Spirit. Through his renewal we can keep the law" (*Apology* IV:293); to the question, "Why should men do good works?", the symbols answer: "Good works should be done because God has commanded them" (*Apology* IV:189). If the President's Report is legalistic, so are the symbols when they say that men ought to believe God's Word and obey His commands.

The Rev. Harry A. Huth, Pastor  
St. John Lutheran Church  
Rice Lake, Wisconsin

**Affirmations and Discussions**

As this issue of *Affirm* goes to press, you still may be puzzled by Dr. John Montgomery's references to a statement adopted by the faculty majority at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, *Affirmations and Discussions (An Affirmation in Two Parts)*. You will be interested in knowing that this document was formally approved by the faculty majority on November 21, 1972. *Affirm* understands that this document will be circulated in the church in the near future.

It apparently serves as one of the faculty responses to the request of Synod's President that each faculty member make a written statement of his position on the issues currently disputed in Missouri. *Affirmations and Discussions* also contains individual faculty members statements, but *Affirm* understands that many of these statements still skirt the controversial issues.

Moreover, some months ago the College of Presidents reiterated the request of President Preus. Once again, members of the faculty have only partly acceded to this request individually to deal with the basic theological issues troubling the church. They have offered, as a supplement and substitute, their joint statement, analyzed in the last issue of *Affirm* — *Affirmations and Discussions*. It is significant that the College of Presidents, at the meeting at which *Affirmations and Discussions* was offered to them, did not accept this faculty document as responsive to the request it had made to the faculty.

*Affirm* believes that the church will appreciate knowing this background to the Montgomery article and will weigh its implications as well as his excellent analysis of this faculty response, carried on *Affirm's* pages last month. *Affirm* plans a further analysis of the Seminary's new and liberal look.

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\* \* \*

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Scriptural Publications, P.O. Box 263, Yuba City, California 95991, carries in stock more than fifty tracts and booklets by such men as Dr. C. F. W. Walther, Professor W. H. T. Dau, Dr. Theodore Engelder, Professor Theodore Graebner, Dr. George Stoeckhardt and others, whose written materials not only form a part of Missouri's legacy, but still offer excellent reading and insights into the Bible's position on contemporary issues. *Affirm* suggests that you query Scriptural Publications for its order blank and publication list.

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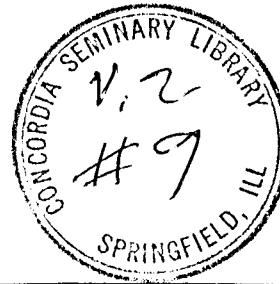
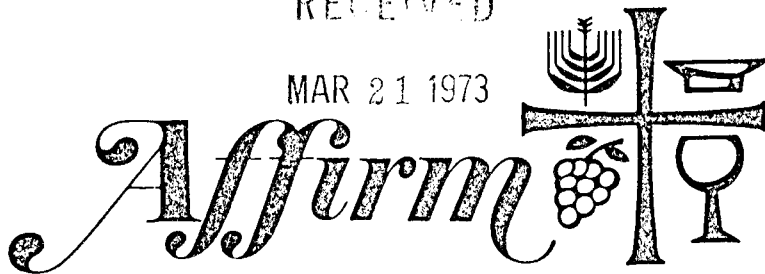
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March, 1973

"I believed,  
and therefore have  
I spoken"  
2 Cor. 4:13

## The Abyss in Missouri

SOME four months apart, representatives of our two seminaries took official stands on the controversy raging throughout our church. While their statements referred to different specific documents, with their comments they both really spoke to the central issues troubling the church.

One statement was adopted by a Board of Control (the governing body of a seminary); this is a resolution passed by the decision-making group at our Springfield school.

The other statement was adopted by the faculty of the St. Louis Seminary, which obviously does not or should not have the last word on how the seminary is run.

At neither school can the faculty speak for the governing group nor the governing group speak for the faculty; each must make its own statements and be responsible for them. But at both schools what either group, the faculty or the school's governors, states reflects in a significant measure the strength and weaknesses of the other group.

*Affirm* quotes from both statements, because they show, as they are regarded side by side, that the church suffers deeply the schizophrenia of two theologies, two ways of thought, two seemingly irreconcilable positions.

The St. Louis faculty rejects President Preus' *Report of the Synodical President*,

"... because the Report of the President misrepresents and distorts the doctrinal position of the faculty ... because ... (it) is divisive and fosters a climate of suspicion and recrimination ... because the theology of the Report ... is unevangelical and unLutheran."

The faculty calls "upon the members of the Synod to reject a theology which tries to enforce ecclesiastical unity and theological uniformity by pressure, threat, and legalistic action and ... downgrades the Gospel so that it becomes only one doctrine among many ..."

THERE'S a lot more in the resolution, but these quotes will serve to inform you about the basic thrust of this document and the tone which the faculty, with full knowledge of what it was doing, adopted over against President Preus and the Fact-Finding Committee and, really, Missouri itself.

In contrast, the January 19th resolution of the Springfield Board of Control states,

WHEREAS the President of Synod has issued *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* as a contribution toward the resolution of critical doctrinal issues which are troubling our Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod at the present time; and

WHEREAS he has commended the study of this *Statement* to the members of the church and invited their use of the same, as an aid to Synod in the 'conservation and promotion of the unity of the true faith' (Synodical Constitution, Article III; see last paragraph of *Statement*); and

WHEREAS we, the members of the Board of Control of Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois, regard the *Statement's* doctrinal content to be in accord with the Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and the Missouri Synod's doctrinal position.

BE IT RESOLVED that we state our intention evangelically to employ the *Statement* in our constitutionally assigned responsibility of seeing to it that the work of the Springfield Seminary is carried on in accordance with the theological standards of the Synod (1971 *Handbook*, 6.39a, pp. 131-132; cf. 6.21, p. 128); and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that we thank Dr. Preus for issuing the *Statement* and implore the Lord's blessing on our church granting us a speedy solution to the problems vexing the Synod.

How vastly different from the tone and contents of the St. Louis faculty statement!

The difference leads to the basic and disturbing question: does the St. Louis Seminary's Board of Control no longer govern its faculty? has it abdicated?

Does it condone the kind of attacks on Synod and its officers which the faculty statement makes? does this governing board itself by silence join in these attacks? has the time at long last clearly come—for the whole church to see now that the entire matter is in the open—to retire this governing body?

Who runs the St. Louis Seminary?

The faculty? its president? the board? the church itself?

*Affirm* believes New Orleans should make that matter very clear.

# How Missourians Settled One Doctrinal Controversy

SINCE there has recently been increased interest in "Gnadenwahl (predestination) convention" of 1881, because of resemblances between its circumstances and those of today, an analysis of the settlement of controversy made at that convention will be valuable. Its background and minutes of the proceedings are found in the *Synodal-Bericht* for the Third Delegate-Synod, at Fort Wayne, Indiana, May 11-21, 1881.

The controversy in Synod was deemed serious:

"Even in our midst members of the self-same synod do battle with each other. In view of that disturbing fact, the unavoidable duty of the presently assembled synod is to publicly declare its position on the doctrine of Election in the present controversy" (p. 27). "All the world knows that in our midst two profoundly different teachings on Election are now being stated . . . The synod cannot endure such a dualism, such a dissension, for another three years, until it meets again" (p. 29).

The seriousness of the situation lay not merely in the fact that there were two opinions, each claiming the support of Scripture and Confessions, but also in the fact that each party called the other unLutheran. In fact, those who dissented from Dr. Walther's position called their opponents "Calvinists" and "Crypto-Calvinists," a heart-rending insult to any devout Lutheran. The fact that such an accusation could be made revealed a deep and fundamental difference about doctrine. Here is a parallel to today's conditions, in which many members of the synod charge others with an unLutheran and Calvinistic approach to the doctrine of inspiration.

So in 1881, though both parties desired to be called Lutherans, there was a confused witness as to what was truly Lutheran. The Waltherians said:

"We are prepared even now to continue dealing with such members of our synod who confess that they lack necessary clarity in this or that article of doctrine, in order to be able yet to agree with us in all things, but we are not prepared to quietly submit to the charge of Crypto-Calvinism and dumbly suffer as our congregations are disquieted, shattered, and torn apart by our opponents" (p. 30). To tolerate two such warring factions was regarded as a unionism worse than that found in the unionistic churches. "They too promote very different doctrines among themselves, but nevertheless practice mutual toleration, because they do not have an earnest heart for the truth . . . But it is different with us. As we condemn the opponents' doctrine as being against Word and Confessions, so they condemn ours" (p.31).

AN effort to settle the matter at a general pastoral conference in Chicago in Fall, 1880 failed, although the anti-Waltherians promised, for the time being, not to write openly against the teaching found in the synod's publications. At the convention a more decisive settlement was called for, a determination of "who belongs to us and who does not" (p. 32). Such a proceeding would not be a determination of which doctrine was right and which false, but of what doctrine the synod wanted to confess. "Thus it will be shown, whether those who reject the doctrine stated in our publications are only a small number, who in that case would leave our house, or whether we, who confess the correct doctrine of Election, find ourselves in the minority, who in

that case would have to move out of what has been our synodical home up till now. This last we are also prepared to do, for our faith is dearer to us than the whole possession of synod, and the pure doctrine more precious than everything earthly" (p. 32).

The convention, therefore, instructed the District Presidents and the professors on the theological faculties to meet and draw up a summary of the public teaching of the synod on election. This committee later reported its inability to fulfill this assignment in so short a time and instead recommended to the synod the 13 theses published by Dr. Walther in *Der Lutheraner*, Vol. 36 (1880), No. 2-9. These (1) briefly and succinctly summarized the public teaching of the synod, and (2) were already known and read in all the congregations. Some have pointed out a parallel between these theses and Dr. J. A. O. Preus' *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* in our day.

AFTER the theses were read aloud, questions were raised as to what position should be taken toward various groups:

(1) Those who could vote neither Aye nor Nay to these theses, because, while not rejecting anything in them, they had suspicions that "in these theses something lies hidden, which does not agree with Word and Confession" (p. 36). Reply: the conscientious searching of these men would be respected, in the hope that further instruction and prayerful diligence would lead them to certainty (p. 36).

(2) Those who expressed full agreement with the theses but could say to the Waltherians: "You have not always and everywhere spoken so carefully." Reply: no one should be blamed for saying this, as long as he did not accuse his opponents of being unLutheran or Calvinist. It could not be denied that unfortunate expressions, which should have been avoided, had been used (p. 36).

(3) Those who disagreed with the public teaching of the synod but could accept the theses by giving them their own private interpretations. Reply: the meaning of the theses must be determined in the context of the other statements of the synod. If any disagree with the public statements of the synod, "then honesty demands that they confess that these theses, in the context of the other statements, do not agree with God's Word and the Confessions of the church and cannot be accepted" (pp. 36-37).

The question then was put to the convention: "Shall the Synod recognize the doctrine of election stated in our publications, insofar as it is expressed in the afore-read 13 theses, as the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions?" This form of putting the question shows clearly that the 13 theses were never regarded as a new standard of orthodoxy or an addition to the Confessions, but as a summary of the synod's published teaching on a doctrine, to be approved as conforming to Scripture and Confessions or to be disapproved.

TO show the necessity of this procedure, the Waltherians appealed to the precedent of the Lutherans of Saxony who faced with the problem of Crypto-Calvinists (the real Crypto-Calvinists!), who subscribed to the Lutheran Confessions but taught a doctrine different from what the old Lutherans

## Controversy . . . (Continued from Page 2)

taught. Here the *Synodal-Bericht* refers to the Saxon Visitation Articles (though it does not explicitly name them), the theses which served as the touchstone by which the Saxon Church separated the Lutherans from the Crypto-Calvinists (F. Bente, *Historical Introduction to the Symbolical Books*, p. 192). The Waltherians declared: "In these footsteps of our fathers we are earnestly disposed to walk, now that a parallel situation has arisen among us!" (p. 30).

At the 1881 convention all delegates but six voted to uphold Walther's summary of Missouri's election stand. The six dissenters were asked to state their reasons for their dissent on the floor of the convention. The synod took no further action but expressed itself thus: (1) that there could be no walking together with those who called the synod's public teaching Calvinistic; (2) that it was now the responsibility of the District Presidents to deal with the opponents of the synod's teaching. No special rules for this assignment were deemed necessary. The synod already had procedures to deal with such situations. The convention was said to have fulfilled its obligation by referring the matter to the District Presidents—"The situation would be different if there were District Presidents who sided with the opponents" (p. 44).

Finally, in anticipation of the objection that the convention was not representative of the whole synod, the following statements were made: (1) a synod of all congregations has met and made a decision; (2) if the congregations do not accept the decision, they will deal with erring teachers as they see fit; (3) it is well known what Missouri's traditional teaching is; (4) if the position adopted by the majority is erroneous, let this be shown from Scripture and Confession (pp. 43-44).

The Rev. Thomas E. Manteufel, Pastor  
St. Peter Lutheran Church, Elma, Iowa

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## Biblical or Biblicistic?

SYNODICAL President Dr. J. A. O. Preus is a quality theologian—he distinguishes carefully and speaks clearly.

His *Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, offered originally as a guideline to the St. Louis Seminary Board of Control as it wallowed helplessly in its effort to cope with the faculty problem, instantly struck a responsive chord throughout Missouri. Synod welcomed it as a strong and steady light in a murky night of theological fog. Copies for study have been ordered by the thousands. Endorsement by congregations and individual signers, recently requested in the *Crossroads* letter to all pastors, is snowballing.

Though more modest in size, Dr. Preus' one-page article, *Biblical or Biblicistic?* (Jan. 28, 1973 *Lutheran Witness*, p. 29) also bears the hallmark of quality theology.

"Biblical," of course, is a word we all know. "Biblicistic" is a new word "used to identify false conceptions of the Bible's authority. . . ." Dr. Preus is too kind to say so, but "Biblicistic" is the tag pinned on the conservatives when they oppose methods of interpretation that question or erode the Biblical text.

Sound Lutheran theology does not teach that "The Gospel is true because it is in the Bible." Rather, "Lutherans say that the Gospel is in the Bible because the Gospel is God's own truth." Sound Lutheran theology does not say that "Faith in the Gospel rests on the conviction that whatever the Bible says is true." Rather, we happily assert that faith "is a gift of God's Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3) . . . and is founded squarely on the Gospel, not on the inerrancy of the Scriptures."

We do not teach that "The authority of the Bible is the doctrine on which the church stands or falls." Rather—and Luther certainly nailed this down—it is the doctrine of justification by grace through faith, "the doctrine that God forgives sinners for the sake of Christ. . . ."

NO, we are not biblicistic. But we certainly are Biblical! For, if Spirit-given faith in Christ saves and if this Good News is true because it comes from God, it also remains forever true that God has seen fit to put this converting, saving Gospel into the Book. Lutherans remember "the curse pronounced upon any one who preaches a gospel that is different from the apostolic Gospel" (Gal. 1:8-9).

We therefore with good reason oppose efforts, however well-meaning, that temper with that Book which cradles our Lord. The Christ we know comes to us from the pages of the Bible. "We treasure these sacred Scriptures as the only source and norm of this precious Gospel." No wonder the Confessions say, "Holy Scripture remains the only judge, rule, and norm according to which as the only touchstone, all doctrines should and must be understood and judged as good or evil, right or wrong."

Dr. Preus concludes, "It is not only soundly biblical but also thoroughly confessional to appeal to the Holy Scriptures as the sole and final authority for everything that we preach and teach in God's name."

Why we believe is one thing—because of the converting power of God's Holy Spirit.

What we believe is another thing—"God's complete message to us in Law and Gospel, the Bible, the whole Bible, nothing but the Bible. So help us God!"

Dr. Preus is to be commended for again calling our attention to the difference. Biblicistic? Never! Biblical? Now and forever!

The Rev. Ewald J. Otto, Pastor  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Quincy, Illinois

# Collegiality

**C**OLLEGIALLY is a movement, sponsored by liberals, to raise the status of District Presidents and to restrict the power of Synod's President.

Article XII of the Constitution, which is titled *Districts and Their Regulation*, contains enough ammunition against any move to alter the relationship between Synod and its Districts and so also of the synodical presidency and that of a district presidency.

The title of this article contains a hint of the traditional relationship between Synod and its Districts. You do not regulate something that is on a par with you, much less something that is set above you.

The relationship between Synod and its Districts, however, is clearly indicated in XII, which begins by saying, "Synod is divided into Districts." Note that it does not say that Synod is composed of Districts. The latter would convey the thought that Synod is a federation of autonomous Districts—Synods, so to speak. The word "divided" presupposes a unit which can be divided—in this case for specific and limited purposes.

Paragraph 1 also indicates who does the dividing, namely, Synod itself. Accordingly, throughout Synod's history, when districts were formed, it was the synod that made the decision. In recent years, for instance, there have been a number of divisions. The old Western, the Central, and the Atlantic Districts were split. In each case the District petitioned Synod, presented its reasons for a change, and it was Synod which authorized the split.

Paragraph 1 states, "The geographical boundaries . . . are determined by Synod and are altered by it according to circumstances."

Clearly, it is Synod as a whole that is in control of the Districts and their operations.

**T**HE rest of Article XII confirms that the synod is in control. It is the Synod that:

1. Dictates the constitution for the Districts;
2. Determines the administrative set-up;
3. Decides the rights and duties of District administrators;
4. Governs the supervision of the doctrine, life, and administration of District pastors and teachers and orders the supervision of congregations;
5. Authorizes suspension of pastors, professors, and teachers for "persistently adhering to false doctrine or for having given offense by an ungodly life;"
6. Requires the District to publicize synodical resolutions "which concern the Districts" and to see that they are carried out;
7. Requires an annual report of District administration to the President of the Synod and an open door for him "to obtain all necessary insight into their (the Districts') official activities as District Presidents."
8. Authorizes the ordination and installation of candidates for the ministry within the respective Districts.
9. Authorizes the signing of all official papers and documents of their Districts.

All of this indicates that the Synod is in control and that Districts and their officials are the servants of Synod and restricted to ancillary operations in their respective areas.

This is expressed clearly in Paragraph 6 of Article 12 which reads:

6. All officers of the Districts have the same rights and duties as those outlined in this Constitution for the officers of Synod but only insofar as these apply to the Districts and only within the boundaries of their Districts.

Only a change in the Constitution can alter the basic make-up of Synod. A mere overture for a change to "collegiality" isn't sufficient. Even if it were adopted, it would be unconstitutional. A demand for a change calling for the elevation of the District Presidents to something akin to a House of Bishops calls for a thorough study by a competent commission because it involves a completely new set-up for Synod, one that has ramifications from top to bottom. Even if such a time and money-robbing commission were to propose such a drastic overhaul of Synod, the change would have to be accepted by Synod's constitutional membership, its congregations and its called pastors and teachers.

**T**HERE is reason to believe that this proposal for collegiality originated in the ranks of the liberals who feel that elevating the District Presidents to something like a policy-making body would curb the President of Synod. They are more than right. It would paralyze him in the performance of his duties, particularly on crucial matters like the current doctrinal controversy.

In this case Synod would face a situation where a "House of Bishops" could actually rise above the will of Synod itself.

Presently, however, some think that the proposal of some insurgents, including some District Presidents, is meant to create a situation on "collegiality" which will buy time for them, since time is bound to play into their hands. What they want is co-existence, tolerance, and the more time they have to stave off a confrontation by delaying tactics, the better their chance to push loyalists aside.

That alone makes this an explosive issue. The liberals tried for collegiality in Milwaukee and lost. Twenty-three District Presidents recently tried to persuade the President of Synod to submit his report on the findings of his Seminary Fact-Finding Committee to them before he reported it to the synod. Failing in that, they called a meeting of District Presidents, calling it a meeting of the Council of Presidents—which it wasn't—and intervened in the controversy in which the President of Synod and the President of the St. Louis Seminary are the principal figures. Conservatives can count on another attempt to establish "collegiality" at the next convention of Synod. And conservatives must be prepared to meet this repeated thrust for organizational change.

Dr. John C. Baur  
St. Louis, Missouri

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# Holy Scripture—Mixture of God's *Truth* and Man's *Error*?

**W**HAT is the basic rule, the guiding, governing principle in the interpretation of Sacred Scripture? Is the standard found in a principle of interpretation that has been devised apart from Scripture—or must this principle be derived from Scripture itself? For example, in Genesis 3, may the interpreter of the Sacred Scriptures “properly insist” (Dr. Habel and others) that “it is not necessary to demand that every action corresponds precisely to the specific incidents or the very words” as Moses records them?

What determines the meaning? The Bible itself, as the verbally inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God? Or the “theological” hermeneutics (interpretation), currently based on the modern view of world and man, “the world view of modern science and the self-understanding of modern man?” (Bultmann, Tillich).

Because Holy Scripture is GOD’S “inbreathed” Word the fathers of the Reformation held:

1) *Scripture is its own interpreter*; 2) *a statement must be taken in its everyday (literal) meaning unless there is compelling evidence that it must be taken in a different sense, figurative, poetic, symbolic, allegoric*; 3) *the true meaning of a given word or passage is one or single, not multiple*.

When the LORD said, “Ye shall do My judgments, and keep Mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the Lord your God,” (Lev. 18, 3) He certainly intended that those who “walk” in His statutes not grope in the dark but say with the psalmist: “Through Thy precepts I get understanding. Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path” (Ps. 119, 194f).

Is Holy Writ, God’s written revelation, a mixture of divine truth and human error? Is the Bible accurate, reliable, also in historical matters? To question the correctness of a clear, plain statement, is to assume that Holy Scripture is not totally free from error, asserting that not “every Word of God is pure” (Prov. 30, 5). Jesus testified to the veracity and validity of the Old Testament, that “all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning Me” (Luke 24, 44). The Holy Spirit, Scripture’s real Author, at this point included no parenthetical elucidation, appended no “necessary” footnote, to the effect that this categorical statement would never be clearly understood until the then yet far-off time of the higher critics.

**T**HE learned Dr. Luke did not consider it “necessary” to observe that all things “written for our learning” could be understood only in the light of the scientific conclusions of the 20th century proponents of academic freedom. Moses told the Israelites “all the words (plural) of God” and wrote these “words” down—the words!—not merely their general purport (Ex. 24, 4), and these very words are also included in the verbally inspired Scriptures.

Precision, exactness of expression, is a most important part of conveying the mind of God, God’s thoughts in words, spoken or written. God said, “I have put My words in thy mouth” (Is. 51, 16). If we cannot trust the Scripture being “word” inspired, what would be the alternative? Every Bible reader would have to find out how much actual truth is in Scripture by his own or other peoples’ wits, to put it baldly, bluntly.

If, for example, we have a chart of a very dangerous coastline, but our chart gives only a very general outline, of what value is that chart for safe navigation? Suppose there is a compass by which we are sailing. We know that compass is *diverted* by some object. But we do not know how much. Of what real use is it to us?

If GOD’S inspired Word does not say what it means and mean what it says, of what use is it to make us wise unto salvation? Is it then still “the chart and compass that o’er life’s surging sea, mid mists and rocks and quicksands, still guides, O Christ, to Thee?” (Hymn 294)

Let’s come back to the Fall narrative. “YEA, HATH GOD SAID?”—“YE SHALL NOT SURELY DIE, . . .” etc. If the *real* Satan speaking through a *real* serpent did not actually say this to the *real* first woman, then just what *did* Satan expressly say at that time and occasion, if anything? If the *true* God did not address the first *real* man, “Adam, where art thou?” and the *real* Adam did not blame the *real* Eve in the words, “The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me;”—if the *real* woman did not accuse a *real* serpent as having “beguiled” her; if the *true* God did not actually, expressly promise the first sinful human beings this one, only serpent’s-head-bruising Deliverer in the very words of the first Gospel, Gen. 3, 15—then, just what *were* the very words used to convey all these thoughts at that time and place?

**W**HO says that here we do NOT necessarily have the very acts and the express words, spoken at that time in connection with this most important historical event? We are told that in our modern day and scientific age we must naturally take for granted that what transpired then did not actually involve a *real* garden of Eden with a *real* tree in its midst, with *real* forbidden fruit, used by a *real* evil spirit, employing a *real* serpent for his most evil purpose! Granted, strictly “scientific” proof for the Eden events is not available, nor can it reasonably be expected. But *there is no sound historical or scientific reason for rejecting the basic FACTS recorded in Genesis 3!!!*

Of one thing we are sure: the books of the Bible as they left the hands of the original writers were (and are) the truth of God Himself. Either we take Scripture as written, including the recorded account of the historic Fall, or we reject it. Bible-believers need not apologize for what the Bible says, nor the way Scripture says it. All Scripture “problems” need not be solved, or all Bible “difficulties” answered this side of glory, before we meet the Author “face to face.”

For correctly interpreting Scripture, we should be sure we know what the Bible is really saying. For example, it would be an error to seek to “prove” our earth to be flat because Is. 11, 12 is translated, “four corners of the earth,” in the King James Version, when literally the word refers to “wings,” which might be understood quite properly as the four points of the compass. Making the Bible say what it does not expressly say is a mistake whereby Scripture’s sincerest defenders only harm the good cause of “defending” the divinely inspired Scriptures.

Scripture itself informs us that the purpose of the “every Scripture is God-breathed” revelation is to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 3, 15-17). And

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## To Get What You Want Intellectually

CONSERVATIVES dare not permit themselves to be disconcerted and intimidated by the "big lie" that the so-called "assured results" of liberal Biblical criticism are the products of "sound scholarship" which with "great integrity" tries to take into account all the "objective data."

Practitioners of the Historical-Critical Method are about as scholarly and objective as the man who "proved" that there are no *small* fish in the ocean by designing and using a net that permitted all but the *big* ones to slip through!

At the risk of belaboring the obvious, let me explain. The historical-critical "net" is purposely constructed so as to "catch" only what those who use it wanted to find to begin with, —or, to put it more precisely, it is so constructed as not to "catch" whatever the critics wanted to eliminate from the outset.

Of course, the critics will resist vigorously every suggestion that the net they use is intentionally designed to serve their purpose. They will insist that their net is a "neutral tool" whose design is dictated by the very nature of the phenomenon they are studying and by the very nature of the investigation they are conducting. But surely historians, especially historians, ought to understand what is meant by "historical conditionedness," and they ought to be sufficiently self-critical to realize that their *mind-set* is a product of the times and has a great deal to do, not only with what they expect to find, but also with the kind of techniques they develop to do their searching.

WHILE critical historians hesitate to make dogmatic pronouncements about what "really happened," they seem to feel quite competent to determine with finality what did *not* happen. They use a net that is ingeniously contrived to let everything pass through except that which they decided in advance to retain.

When critics are fishing for the authentic sayings of Jesus, for instance, they use a net with a mesh so large that it will catch only those sayings which do not, in their judgment, presuppose a post-Easter situation, and which cannot be paralleled in contemporary non-canonical sources. When they dip this net into the synoptic tradition, what do you suppose they catch? Naturally, whatever *their* net does not hold goes back into the water as inauthentic, as a "contribution" of the evangelist.

Critics will argue that their net is quite legitimate, since "sayings of Jesus" which presuppose a post-Easter situation or have parallels in other contemporary sources cannot be attributed to Him. But this is *simply to assume what needs to be proven*, namely that some "sayings of Jesus" could not possibly have been spoken by Him in a pre-Easter situation, and that the mere existence of a parallel saying automatically precludes the possibility that such a saying was ever uttered by Jesus. The net is constructed from quite arbitrary premises—but the critics think that they can use it with confidence to make judgments about what Jesus could *not* have said.

WHEN the critical historian turns his attention to Biblical reports of *events*, his methods are no less open to question. By arbitrarily invoking the principle of analogy he thinks he is able to say what did *not* happen, and then by "reading history from the inside" he thinks he can explain what made the writer say it did happen. Here we have the case of the man who disproved a report that there

are small fish in the ocean by using a net that catches only the big ones, and who then tries to figure out why in the world anyone ever reported that there are small fish in the ocean when it isn't so at all!

Conservatives are all for scholarship, integrity, objectivity. —that's why we plead for these qualities in students of the Scriptures. But we hope to be forgiven for asking what kind of objective scholarship it is that arrives at its "assured results" by such procedures as these:

1) From the report of an evangelist concerning a saying of Jesus, a post-Easter situation to which this saying presumably *must* have been addressed is fabricated, and then it is simply alleged that *since* the saying in question was addressed to *that* situation it could not have been spoken by Jesus on the occasion reported by the evangelist!

2) From the report of an evangelist concerning a *deed* of Jesus a situation is invented which presumably accounts for his saying that so-and-so happened that way when it actually didn't, and then it is argued that since the evangelist said what he said the way he said it because of the situation in which he said it, it is altogether probable that what he said was never "intended" to be a report of something that actually happened! We beseech the scholars to be lenient with us if we have a little difficulty in accepting their "assured results"—and if we do not fear that traditional positions are gravely threatened by their "findings."

But, for the sake of argument, let us grant for the moment that the Historical-Critical Method of studying and interpreting the Bible is the only method acceptable to "honest" scholarship. Then honest scholarship ought to feel compelled in the name of honesty to declare openly that their method calls not only for a radically different understanding of the Scripture, but also for a radically different conception of the *authority* of the Scriptures from that which has been held throughout Christendom hitherto.

If the validity of the Historical-Critical Method is granted, then it is not legitimate to approach the Gospels, for instance, expecting to get factual information about things that Jesus actually said and did. It is an assumption of the Historical-Critical Method that the evangelists did not "intend" to present biographical data the facticity of which was open to public scrutiny, but were rather making highly creative use of traditions about Jesus which had gradually developed here and there in the Christian community for the purpose of communicating in the language and thought-patterns of *their time* how *they* "interpreted" the significance of Jesus' life and death. It is a further assumption of the Historical-Critical Method that the evangelists' "interpretation" of Jesus was *wholly conditioned* by their "situation." This means that while their writings are valuable for finding out *what* the evangelists said and *why* they said it that way, their writings are not definitive for *our* "interpretation" of Jesus in *our* "situation."

Of what use are the Gospels when we use a method of studying them which tells us in advance not to expect answers to such questions as these: What did Jesus really teach and do? What is the one, and true, and abiding meaning of all that Jesus said and did for us men and for our salvation? If the Gospels are merely "authority" for on-going theological speculation and christological re-interpretation, then they serve only as launching-pads for trial balloons.

The Rev. Harry Huth, Pastor  
St. John Lutheran Church, Rice Lake, Wisconsin

## Gospel and Scripture

ONE of the most disturbing developments in recent years within our church is the confusion over the relationship of the Gospel and Holy Scripture. Lutheran theology has always emphasized that the heart and focus of faith is the Gospel, the justification of the sinner by the grace of God through faith. This is known as the *material principle* because it has to do with the chief matter or substance of God's revelation to men. By the same token, Lutheran theology has insisted that the only norm for doctrine in the church, for judging all teaching and all teachers, is Holy Scripture, the inspired prophetic-apostolic Word. This is the *formal principle*, because Scripture is the single authority in the church for norming or forming articles of faith.

Much of the Christian world caved in long ago on the formal principle, *sola Scriptura*. Inevitably this spelled the end, too, of the Gospel.

Now this plague is in Missouri's camp. The symptoms are very familiar. Learned voices argue that the formal principle held by our forefathers was slavishly Biblicistic, even legalistic; that actually the Gospel, which is the heart of the Scripture, ought to be recognized as having the governing control rather than the Scriptures which are, allegedly, the ancient human witness to God's revelation; and that this is only proper way of handling the whole matter of doctrine in the church, since it allows evangelical freedom and does not bind consciences on matters that are not explicitly a part of the Gospel.

Many pastors and laymen have sensed that there's something awry about all this, something not Lutheran-sounding. For this reason the Commission on Theology and Church Relations has made the matter a top priority and published a position paper on it. The church obviously needs to iron out this business. There's need for the Lutheran stance again to be heard. Some of the CTCR's thoughts are given here in preliminary digest. Two questions require answering, according to the CTCR study:

- 1) What is meant by the statement that the Gospel is norm in the Scriptures? and
- 2) In what sense is Scripture source and norm of the Gospel?

LET'S look at each question and summarize here the substance of the CTCR answer.

- 1) *That the Gospel is the chief article of Christian doctrine there can be little doubt.*

Scriptures assert it plainly (Luke 24, 47; Mt. 24, 14; Mark 16, 15; Rom. 1, 16; Acts 20, 24). Our Confessions also affirm it, stating that the "article concerning justification by faith is the chief article in the entire Christian doctrine" (*Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, III, 6*).

The CTCR document points out, what should be obvious, that this does not mean that there are not other *important* doctrines in Christian faith. It's only that the whole focus of Scripture is missed or thrown off, if this article on the Gospel is obfuscated, blurred, or denied.

So, in a real sense the Gospel is norm or control element in the Scriptures. Fail to assert this, as Luther reminds us, and then what is left?

Also it is true that our Confessions are always concerned about how other doctrines relate to the Gospel. Nothing that is Biblical will ever negate or be contrary to the Gospel.

As long as the Gospel is norm it will never be possible to understand the relation of faith and works in such a way as to support salvation by works.

However, there are any number of teachings, e.g., in connection with the function of the Law in Christian life and conduct, where not the Gospel but the Law is the norm. This is not to deny, of course, that the moving power for sanctified life for the believer is his faith, which is prompted and sustained by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel.

Again, the Gospel is not norm for our supporting, or not supporting, the Holy Scriptures as the inspired, authoritative Word of God in all its parts. The Scriptures have their authority from God Himself by virtue of His inspiration.

Nor is the Gospel norm in the sense of a basic premise from which to "construct" one's theological system—a favorite trick in some theologians' bag for sounding orthodox and yet cashing in Scripture's authority and content!

THEN, too, while the Gospel, in its distinction from the Law, is the chief interpretative principle in understanding the place of faith and works in the believer's life, it does not follow that it can be used arbitrarily, particularly not as a delimiting mechanism against the Scripture, or parts of it. It is an abuse of the Law/Gospel distinction to treat Sacred Scripture as a merely human writing, often harboring conflicting traditions and theologians, and not historical in the usual sense of the word.

"What does Scripture say?" was the reverent attitude towards Scripture taught by our Lord and His apostles. Scripture deserves to be regarded with highest esteem as the Holy Word of God precisely because it was *given by God for the sake of the Gospel!*

- 2) *On Scripture as the norm of the Gospel, the average Christian knows that we would have no Gospel today, if we did not have the Scriptures.*

Of course, the Gospel itself, first proclaimed to Adam and Eve, antedates the written Scriptures themselves, and God continued for some time to speak His promise of salvation directly to chosen patriarchs and prophets for them to proclaim orally.

When God purposed to have His Word written, it was *for the Gospel's sake*, that it might be transmitted carefully and faithfully to succeeding generations. Thus we rightly treasure Holy Scripture as the only source and norm of the precious Gospel.

The truth of the Gospel, we know, is first of all and finally in God Himself. We do not try to prove its truth by the Scriptures. It is as true as God is true Who gave it. But, having been given Holy Scriptures by God *for the sake of the Gospel*, we are much concerned always to prove that *the Gospel which we teach is in fact Scriptural*. This is no meaningless circle! It is so only to unbelief.

The Scriptures are powerful because of the Gospel they proclaim, and it is because of this Gospel that they are "able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3, 15).

Paul, as an apostle of the Lord, could rightly claim that the Gospel he preached was given to him directly by the Lord (Gal. 1, 12), and yet he, like the other apostles, took

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# The Historical-Critical Method and Biblical Prophecy

FOR many centuries predictive prophecy and Biblical miracles were considered the two great evidences for Christianity as a supernaturally revealed religion. The miracles were regarded as revealing God's power and love (Matt. 9:5,6); Biblical prediction, His omniscience (Is. 46:9,10) and faithfulness (Josh. 12:45). The element of predictive prophecy was used effectively in early Christian polemic as reflected in the New Testament. There was a time when the relationship between prophecy and fulfillment was held without fear of objection, but this relationship did not go unquestioned. One of the earlier opponents of Christianity was Porphyry, a non-Christian philosopher, who denied the possibility of predictive prophecy as early as the third century B.C. However, it was not until the Age of Enlightenment (Aufklaerung), with its religious counterpart known as Rationalism, that the traditional concept of predictive prophecy was widely challenged.

The *Lutheran Cyclopedia* (Concordia, 1954) claims that this new challenge to predictive prophecy was the result of "the subjective and rationalistic spirit of the 18th century which declared its independence of the authority of Biblical revelation . . ." The Protestant scholar Berkeley Michelsen declared that this spirit of "naturalistic rationalism argued that real prediction is impossible in a universe governed wholly by cause and effect . . ." But the severest blow to the concept of predictive prophecy came from the theological liberalism of the second half of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. This was followed by neo-orthodoxy which put into operation the tenets of higher criticism that employed the Historical-Critical Method, subjecting Biblical prophecy to re-examination.

Since the Historical-Critical Method rejects the supernatural it is forced to reject the Biblical doctrines of revelation and inspiration. Critical Biblical scholarship cannot fully accept the fact that God could or would make truths known about Himself and also reveal secrets and truths which man could not discover by his own intuition or reasoning processes. That the Holy Spirit guided chosen men to write books that set forth what God wanted them to record and guided them in the selection of the data incorporated in a given Biblical book which among other things included predictions about the future of individuals and nations is a stance that is unreasonable for rationalistic scholars, committed to a closed universe.

MODERN historiography believes that everything which has happened and is happening can be explained in terms of cause and effect. The practitioners of the Historical-Critical Method will not brook interference in the affairs of men from outside the universe. This was the heart of R. Bultmann's famous essay of 1942 calling upon scholars and Bible readers to "demythologize" the New Testament, that is to get rid of all supernatural elements, such as miracles and predictive prophecy.

Predictive prophecy has been aptly called the "miracle in words." If the position of historical criticism is taken seriously it means the rejection of many passages of both Testaments and requires a reinterpretation of many verses and chapters that are written in predictive form. This means that the Bible reader cannot believe the clear statements of the Word of God. Both the Old and the New Testaments contain statements which if taken as they read can only

be understood as predictive and descriptions of events that will occur and will be fulfilled in the future. The first prophecy in the Bible that is a prediction is the one God spoke to the serpent: "I will put enmity between you and the woman between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). Throughout the ages, Christians of many different denominations considered this a prophecy concerning the coming of Christ and his victory over Satan. This was the understanding of Luther and the Lutherans Confessions and of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Old Testament scholars employing the Historical-Critical Method deny this as a Gospel promise. According to form criticism a promise cannot occur within a series of curses and therefore the true meaning of Genesis 3:15 is that there will be a hatred between men and snakes in the future.

IN chapter 49 Jacob foretells what will happen to the future descendants of his sons. The outstanding prophecy in this chapter is the one directed by Jacob to his fourth oldest son: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the leader's staff between his feet until Shiloh comes, and Him the peoples shall obey." Modern critical scholarship denies that Jacob spoke these words about the Messiah and claims that it was written in David's time to glorify the son of Jesse's reign.

Many of the predictions found in the Old Testament about future events are denied to the prophet in whose book they occur. For example most of the prophecies about the nations in Isaiah, chapters 13-23 are said not to have been uttered by Isaiah. In chapter 13:1; 39:6 Isaiah predicted the Babylonian captivity of the southern kingdom. In chapter 45:1-3 Isaiah announced the end of the Babylonian captivity 200 years before it happened. Such future happenings the users of the Historical-Critical Method claim would have been impossible for Isaiah to have foreseen and announced. The prophet Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah, in chapter 3:12 predicted: "Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height." This verse and others in Micah are said to be interpolations but not predictions actually uttered and written down by Micah of Moresheth. Chapters 46-51 of Jeremiah, ascribed by the Biblical text to the prophet (46:1; 46:13; 50:) are said to come from a much later period, spoken also by a different person than Jeremiah.

The denial of the fact of predictive prophecy in the Old Testament also means that there cannot be specific prophecies about the person and work of Christ, the Messiah. Those who reject predictive prophecy in the Old Testament have engaged in a reinterpretation of clear New Testament passages that describe various facts about the coming Redeemer. Thus Matthew stated in 1:22 "All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel (which means God with us)," thus clearly quoting Isaiah 7:14 as a prophecy of the Virgin Conception and Birth. In Matthew 22:41-45 Jesus argues that David in Psalm 110:1 had spoken about Him and in a number of passages in Psalm 110 facts are predicted about Jesus of Nazareth, King and High Priest.

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# The Book On The Top Shelf

N and of itself so-called 'historical critical' method-is neutral." (Part I, Faithful To Our Calling Faithful or Lord, Page 41).

perly understood, the foregoing statement is true, but if it is properly understood. Neutrality does not mean unlimited usage becomes permissible. A pistol is also al when it is thought of as a device for projecting an t at a high velocity. The pistol can be used, rightly or ightly, for sending a bullet into a target, an animal, or man being. It is the purpose for which it is used that rmines right or wrong, not the method.

o it is with historical methodology. Allow me to explain. n my life I have a "bookcase" consisting of three "shelves" which I store the knowledge that I have accumulated. We y not be aware of it, but this is true for each of us. On : bottom shelf are all the science books, telling us how the vs of nature function, and how we can use them. The owledge is obtained through experiments, with the results ing interpreted by the minds of men. These books occupy e bottom shelf because they are of least value to mankind. ue, their information has made it possible for us to enjoy l the creature comforts of life, but it does not deal with ose questions which cause us a deeper concern.

As an example, science gave us the nuclear bomb, but annot tell us whether it is right or wrong to use it. Through he use of scientific knowledge it has become relatively safe nd simple to perform an abortion, but that same knowledge eaves us struggling with the moral issue involved. The science shelf needs a form of higher knowledge to provide guidance in the proper use of these sterile instruments.

Philosophy attempts to provide us with these principles. Its methods differ greatly from that of science. The scientist uses experimental results; the philosopher contemplates human experience. In doing this he requires very little equipment; in fact, a quiet room and a soft rocking chair will suffice. He tries to tell us why a certain action is good or bad, why we should live this way or that, why we should vote for or against an issue.

I N so doing he attempts to help us reach practical decisions, both individually and as a society, in problem areas. We are also left with a dilemma, for the philosophy shelf contains dozens of answers to every problem. If I am to have any order in my life, I must choose one of them as my philosophy, and place it on the third shelf all by itself, to rule over all the others. We all do this to some extent, usually using as a guide the philosophy of someone we admire greatly. The question is—which should you choose?

The philosopher, however, does not have the means to answer questions concerning human origin, purpose, or destiny. He has tried to, in such philosophies as evolution, humanism, and reincarnation, but his answers are pure conjecture. If he is to answer these questions with certainty, his information must come from outside the human mind.

This is the unique claim that God makes: He, who exists outside the sphere of human experience, who has no beginning or end, has answered these questions for us. He tells us that the Holy Spirit inspired specific men to write at various times in history, guiding their thoughts in a mysterious way so that they, using their own thought patterns, recorded the truth of events they had never witnessed. They told us of a God they could never understand, a beginning that no man had seen, a forgiveness through Christ they

could not comprehend, an eternal glory that they would experience only after death.

**G**OD guided the assembling of these documents into what we call the Bible. God *did not* use human documents as we know them, records written by fallible men filled with errors because of limited understanding. His writings were unique! Guided by His hand, men recorded both scriptural and historical truths in a manner which they couldn't humanly accomplish.

All this appears unreasonable, and cannot be proven by human methods. It is beyond human comprehension. I must accept it by a faith given me by God as I contemplate His Word. There He has told me that this is what took place. There I see the attitude of Christ as He used this Word. That is proof enough for me.

This is the book that God tells us to place on the third and top shelf, in its totality, and all by itself. It is to this source that we should go when we encounter questions concerning origins, purpose, ethical decisions, salvation, and eternal destiny. And, unlike philosophies which are constantly changing, this book never needs to be replaced.

But often where Scripture contradicted philosophy, many theologians retreated. In recent times they have placed Scripture on the second shelf by defining it an ordinary history book, as limited and full of errors as any other history book. The tool that they used to downgrade the Bible is "Historical-Critical" reasoning.

They replaced it on the top shelf with a looseleaf book called "gospel" supposedly the remains of Scripture after all the human history had been removed. It supposedly contains the kernel of God's message to man remaining after all the husks have been removed and placed on the second shelf.

**T**HE problem is that we never really know what is inside that looseleaf book, for a human being ultimately decides what the kernel will be. For some it is almost all of Scripture; for others it contains only John 3:16. A number have just a single word "love" written on a page, and have fastened alongside it a copy of Fletcher's book, *Situation Ethics*. There are also those "gospel" books which inform you that all paths lead to heaven, as long as you are sincere.

Therein lies the difficulty! It is only when I look at Scripture in its totality that I can be sure of *what* the Gospel is. As soon as I start picking and choosing I end up with philosophy, and my desires enter in.

Anyone who uses the Historical-Critical Method has relegated Scripture to the second shelf. This method was devised to deal with secular history, events recorded by human beings with all their prejudices, beliefs, frailties, and desires. The word "critical" implies that we are going to dig through all of this to discover the truth. It can only be used validly on philosophical writings.

If this is all that Scripture is, use the critical method. But somehow, God's Word doesn't seem to fit that category. I doubt if Jesus felt he was referring to human thoughts or myth and legend when he refuted the devil.

What do you want on the top shelf of the people belonging to your church body—Scripture, or a looseleaf book labeled "gospel," whose contents are never clearly defined? The events of the next year may determine which it will be! May God help us repeat what Luther once proclaimed—**SOLA SCRIPTURA!**

Richard Korthals, Lay Evangelist  
Arcadia, Michigan

## On The News Front

### Crossroads

The good news about the *Crossroads* appeal is starting to come to its headquarters. As *Affirm* goes to press there have been 631 favorable responses from individuals and congregations, who have endorsed the *Statement*; these responses represent 154,900 communicant members. Since its signers put the *Crossroads* letter into the mails after the first of the year and many congregations have not as yet held voters' meetings, the initial response to the appeal seems excellent. You will be interested to know that some 16,445 people have physically signed their personal endorsement of the *Statement*. *Crossroads* urges you to get your congregation's endorsement as soon as possible.

### Missouri Compromise

The *Sword and the Trumpet*, the Mennonite publication, in its September issue, saw Missouri's theological problem in the following way:

The liberal-conservative controversy that has wracked the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod for a number of years has recently intensified. Following the recent doctrinal examination of a professor at Concordia, the Church's seminary at St. Louis, the Board of Control decided not to renew his contract because of his modernistic views. This precipitated a controversy over the case, and the professor was later reinstated by Board action. The controversy then spread across the whole church, with the president of the denomination issuing a directive that the professor not be reinstated pending an official investigation of the case. The president of the seminary then defied the order, adding to the confusion.

Involved is the basic question of Biblical interpretation. It is no secret in the denomination that the historical-critical method with the Scriptures has gained a heavy foothold in Concordia Seminary. This approach is defended in the seminary as valid within the confessional standards of the church. To the large conservative constituency within the Missouri Synod this amounts to complete compromise of doctrine.

To complicate the situation, the accrediting agency, the American Association of Theological Schools, has stepped into the case. It has placed the Seminary on a two-year probation and has threatened loss of accreditation if the church does not desist from "undue outside interference in the operation of the Synod school."

It would seem that in this case the right of a church to control its schools in line with its confessional standards is severely abridged. The so-called right of academic freedom is elevated above the true interests of the church, and raises the question of whether accreditation of its schools is worth what it is likely to cost any religious body that wants ultimately to be true to its purposes.

### LCUSA

*Affirm* hopes that Missouri will critically re-examine its LCUSA connections and financial assistance to this group at New Orleans. The synod now directly contributes \$800,000 to this agency, which annually spends \$400,000 for public relations alone and needs a staff of 20 to carry just its public relations work. Meanwhile Missouri limps along with 3 full-

time PR staff members. What makes the situation even stranger is that LCUSA's press releases regularly place Missouri in a bad light and seem slanted against Missouri's president. The question for delegates to puzzle over is this: why should Missouri pay hundreds of thousands of dollars to support a group which gives it a bad press?

### The Coming Election

You will be hearing more about the liberal slate for the New Orleans elections. Headed by Dr. Oswald C. J. Hoffmann, this slate will oppose the re-election of Dr. Preus around whom conservatives are rallying. There can be no question about the crucial importance of the New Orleans election in Missouri's history. No "moderate" candidate can any longer successfully straddle the fence or reconcile the two theologies in Missouri. Missouri has gone far beyond that point. As a future issue of *Affirm* will show in greater detail, from now on a vote against Preus must inevitably be a vote for the Seminary's liberal theology and all that this implies.

### Pamphlet Available

Missouri's Commission on Theology and Church Relations has just released another gem called, *Scripture and Gospel*. This brief pamphlet deals with the crucial question of the inerrancy of the Bible, as seen by conservatives, and the liberal approach of using the Gospel contents of the Bible to determine what in the Bible is true and factual and what is false and erring and mythical. Technically the pamphlet deals with the "formal principle" and the "material principle," terms that sound much more difficult than they really are. You can obtain a copy of this pamphlet, which throws more light on Missouri's struggle and expands on the fine article by Dr. Klug in this issue of *Affirm*, for 60 cents from Concordia Publishing House, 3558 South Jefferson Avenue, Saint Louis, Missouri 63118.

### The Kretzmann Story

The Kretzmann story in *INFO* (a liberal publication) raised doubts in our mind as to its accuracy, and so we asked Dr. Waldo J. Werning a few questions.

**AFFIRM:** Dr. Werning, *INFO* maintains that the refusal of an extension of service for Dr. Martin L. Kretzmann climaxed a two-year campaign led by you. What really happened?

**Werning:** Many members of Synod disagree with Dr. Kretzmann's position. As an elected member of a Board, I had the added responsibility of approving of his work as a staffman of Synod. Thus I requested visits with him, two of which were granted, and I also wrote letters on other occasions to try to show where corrections were called for. He disregarded most of my letters and objected to such visits because we disagreed about the applications of theological and ecumenical principles. These visits, attempts at effective Christian communication, were made difficult by Kretzmann's attitude and his reluctance to clarify differences of theological confusion.

**AFFIRM:** Did an analysis of the Board's Minority Report to the Milwaukee Convention demonstrate that quotations from Kretzmann's writings were out of context and distorted their intention?

**Werning:** A careful reading of the three essays will show the staff evaluation (which involved Kretzmann himself) not

(Continued on Page 11)

**Mixture . . .** (Continued from Page 5)

for this primary purpose, if for no other, the Bible is and must be true in every part and word. "Thy Word is Truth" (John 17, 17).

Why should the Scripture's claim of truthfulness not also apply to the Bible's own account of man's first revolt as a matter of historical record? And report that initial rebellion, precisely also as to the specific stages or incidents, including the very words involved on the occasion?

In spite of any difficulty we encounter, let us never forget that Christ Himself, well aware of all the difficulties, acknowledged it to be GOD's Word, and quoted it as infallibly true. If He could regard the Old Testament as He did, we certainly are not justified in denying its truth (or that of the New Testament) and divine inspiration merely because of some difficulty our limited intelligence cannot solve to its satisfaction.

"The Word they still shall let remain!"

Dr. Paul M. Freiburger, Pastor  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Billings  
Honorary President, Montana District

**Kretzmann . . .** (Continued from Page 10)

only to be an unproven allegation, but it will show that the statements were signals of what the entire essays said. Readers can judge for themselves: "What On Earth Does The Gospel Change?" (*Lutheran World*, Vol. XXVI, No. 4, 1969); "Where Is The Church Going in World Missions?" (*Papers & Proceedings, Workshop on Church-Ministry*, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., July 29-31, 1969, Concordia Seminary Print Shop—1970); "Theological Education" (Presentation to the Board of World Missions, LCA, Nov. 11, 1968).

**AFFIRM:** Were your questions of Dr. Kretzmann complex, demanding yes-or-not answers?

**Werning:** The questions involved such matters as whether faith is required for salvation, the *Openness and Trust* document, and the necessity of a Synodical staffman to abide by Synod's resolutions on doctrine. There is nothing complex about these issues or others discussed with him by members of the Board, and it should have been easy for him to answer simply, even with a yes or no.

**AFFIRM:** Any comments on the voting by which his contract was not renewed?

**Werning:** It seems odd that the chairman is picked out for the exercise of his voting rights, as though his vote counts more than others. The statement that I broke the tie is inaccurate, because the tie vote already meant that the notion to renew his contract did not prevail.

When it is said that Board members refused to give reasons or their negative vote, it should be remembered that there were discussions with Dr. Kretzmann within the Board since December 1971, and it is apparent that the discussion brought sufficient reasons for a negative vote.

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With their generous support many of its friends have made the publication of *Affirm* possible.

You also can help defray its cost by contributing in any amount to *Affirm*. Please make checks payable to:

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**Tapes are \$6.50**

The three tapes dealing with the grave issues facing Synod, which were outlined in the January issue of *Affirm*, are available at \$6.50 each. All of the tapes are ninety minutes in length.

One, focuses on the ordination of women into the public ministry, a recording by Professor David Scaer; the second, *The Historical-Critical Method*, a recording by Dr. Robert Preus; and the third deals with the issues facing Synod, including its seminaries, the investigation by the Fact-Finding Committee, higher criticism and other crucial matters by President J. A. O. Preus, Dr. David Scaer, Dr. Raymond Surburg, President Richard Schultz and Dr. Eugene Klug.

These tapes are available from Mr. Alfred Tessmann, 13761 Joyce Drive, Largo, Florida 33540.

**Gospel . . .** (Continued from Page 7)

it as the major concern of his life to show that what he believed and preached was in agreement with the Scriptures. (Rom. 10, 11; 1 Tim. 5, 18; Gal. 4, 30; Acts 17, 2; 18, 28; 24, 14).

Our Lutheran Confessions follow the apostolic pattern closely, seeking to prove that the Gospel they preached (and all other articles of the faith) was indeed Scriptural. So, the material principle (Gospel) is always seen as deriving from and being inseparably tied to the formal principle (Scriptures)—Cp. *Apology* III, 179, 262, 305ff. They insist that the two principles are very closely and mutually interdependent.

3) Conclusion: Lutheran theology, loyal to the Confessions and, first of all, to the Scriptures, understands that this inseparable unity between the Gospel and Scriptures is God's doing.

He has given us His Gospel in Holy Writ. We must not pit the one against the other in any way! That would be to pit the chief message against its source, or the source against the central message!

A Lutheran worthy of the name refuses to set up a question like this: Is the Bible God's authoritative Word because it proclaims the Gospel or because it is inspired? He affirms that rather than either/or, it's a case of both/and!

Our Savior, God's precious Son, comes wrapped in human flesh (1 Tim. 3, 16), to take away the sins of the world (John 1, 29). This is His Gospel. The precious gift of God's Holy Word by which we know Him comes to us wrapped in the prophetic and apostolic Word, Holy Scripture, to make us wise unto salvation (2 Tim. 3, 15).

Dr. Eugene F. Klug  
Concordia Seminary  
Springfield, Illinois

**Prophecy . . .** (Continued from Page 8)

Forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem Jesus predicted the coming destruction of Jerusalem, which was fulfilled in 70 A.D. Scholars using the Historical-Critical Method have claimed that this is not the case, but that later Christian writers attributed these predictions to Jesus which He never spoke. If true prophecy is an impossibility, one must ask: what about all the predictions about the Second Coming, the judgment of the nations and the resurrection of the just and unjust? Prophecy is part and parcel of the warp and woof of both Testaments. He who denies Biblical prophecy is striking a blow at the very heart of Christianity.

Dr. Raymond F. Surburg  
Concordia Theological Seminary  
Springfield, Illinois

## Lutheran Laymen Meet

A highly significant meeting of Missouri Synod laymen took place outside of Chicago on February 3. Its purpose was to unite concerned laymen from all over the synod in a common effort "to preserve the synod's historical doctrinal position" and to "promote synodical programs of evangelism and mission in the Church which are true to the Great Commission of our Lord." The group saw these two great objectives as closely related to each other, and its members gathered to consider what they as laymen might do to help Missouri in its present crisis to achieve these goals. The laymen, attending on their own time and expense, represented twenty-eight districts of the Missouri Synod. From the east and west coasts, the deep south, from Canada and even faraway Alaska laymen flew in for the one-day meeting.

The gathering had many good results. Concerned laymen, previously separated by great distances, were able to meet together, get acquainted and express themselves. A remarkable unity of doctrine and purpose was evidenced throughout the day in all the discussions. A lengthy set of objectives was unanimously adopted. A steering committee was elected to implement the purposes of the group. Attempts will be made to hold similar programs all over the country and help instruct the entire synod, both clergy and laity, about the issues facing the Missouri Synod and the way in which these issues might be met in a Scriptural and evangelical manner. The only negative note sounded at the meeting was the repeated complaint that pastors often did not inform their congregations about Synod's problems.

The complete unanimity of all the laymen present, their unity of faith and purpose impressed observers. It is remarkable that so many laymen would come together on short notice to such a meeting. Remarkable too was the deep grasp these laymen had of the issues facing Synod today. These men knew theology of the *Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*. They knew just what problems were created by continued fellowship with the American Lutheran Church and our membership in LCUSA. They had read the Crossroads letter and they wanted to act on it. They understood how the Historical-Critical Method of approaching Scripture, recently introduced into our Synod, erodes the authority of Scripture. They knew their Scriptures and were acquainted with the Lutheran Confessions. Missouri blessedly has a strong, committed and conservative laity willing to work for what it believes.

AND these men will work! "Lutheran Laymen United for Doctrinal Concerns" will probably be the name of this loosely knit group. Their program will no doubt grow and be a real help to Missouri in its present struggles.

The Objectives adopted by this group are these:

To promote the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To assist the Synod in remaining truly loyal to the Holy Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions.

To promote a clear recognition of the issues involved in the two differing theologies which are being taught in the Synod today.

To preserve the Synod's historic doctrinal position.

To enable the Synod to see to it that its doctrinal position is respected, accepted and taught in the St. Louis Seminary and at all of Synod's other institutions of higher learning.

To support the officials of the Synod in their work and doctrinal supervision.

To insist on a return to constitutional government in the Synod and to eliminate the use of public relations tactics which degrade the name of Christ's church.

To encourage sound and faithful stewardship in the Synod.

To promote Synodical programs of Evangelism and Mission in the Church which are true to the Great Commission of our Lord.

To establish and maintain communications concerning issues and persons in the Synod.

To promote local study groups, workshops, seminars and/or forums for the discussion of doctrinal issues before the Synod.

To distribute materials which serve to provide the Church with full and adequate information on topics in controversy.

To observe and effectively respond to lectures, newspaper publicity, etc., which attack the Synodical position on Doctrine or tear down Synod's administration.

To determine unequivocally the doctrinal position of nominees for office in the Synod so that delegates at the New Orleans Synodical Convention may vote intelligently.

To inform delegates to the New Orleans Convention of the issues and of the desire of the Synod's constituency to remain faithful in its historic Lutheran doctrinal position.

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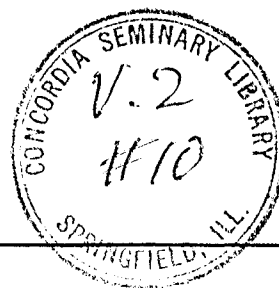
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"I believed,  
and therefore have  
I spoken"  
2 Cor. 4:13

## How To Destroy Orthodox Doctrine in Synod While Appearing To Be Orthodox

ON February 27th, the Council of District Presidents voted to oppose the *Crossroads* petition in support of the *Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, which so far has been endorsed by more than 200,000 pastors, teachers, congregational officers, and members. By the same lop-sided majority of 22-12 they voted also to request that Synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations "issue no public evaluation of the recent joint and individual belief statements of the Concordia Seminary faculty" (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, March 1, 1973).

Claiming to seek peace in Synod, these 22 District Presidents are recommending the suppression of the confessional truth by which the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has lived so far. They do not want a firm and clear orthodox voice to be heard which says to all who will listen: Here we stand! Rally around! Support those men who will support without reservations or personal fears the orthodox truth we have hitherto confessed!

Led by such District Presidents as Jacobs, Baumgaertner, Ressmeyer, Neunaber, Heckmann, Bernthal, the leftists, with a mind that expressed itself in totalitarian ways maintained for many hours a drum fire of invective against the *Statement* and against the conservative administration of President Preus. They made an unremitting effort to force the weaker District Presidents into their machine. The performance struck some of the more thoughtful District Presidents as reminiscent of the spiritual obscenities at Milwaukee in 1971. There can be little question that some District Presidents are indeed willing to promote doctrinal chaos in the LC-MS.

The aggrandizing activity of the 22 District Presidents should be exposed to our pastors, teachers, and congregations. Originally, District Presidents were parish pastors in a geographical area who were elected to their part-time assignment of assisting the President of Synod in the task of supervising and administering the work of Synod in their particular area. But lately they have encroached upon the office of the President of Synod on a number of occasions. They have interfered in his administration as the chief supervisor of Synod in doctrine and practice. They have given aid and comfort to those who are known to teach false doctrine. They have publicly opposed the President of Synod with the claim of offering their advice.

In the order of elected synodical officials, District Presidents stand between Circuit Counsellors and the President of Synod. But there are some significant differences working to the advantage of the District Presidents. Whereas a District President is elected by a District, the Circuit Counsellors are not elected by their Circuits but by their Districts. That is considered a good thing, because election by the District reduces some of the personal pressures likely to be di-

rected at Circuit Counsellors in the performance of their work. Similarly, it may be a good thing also if District Presidents were required to stand for election in synodical conventions.

CIRCUIT Counsellors are parish pastors. They do not give full time service to their Circuits. Most District Presidents are now in full time service and seek to control the policies of the synodical administration. In their Districts, however, they generally do not provide for bi-monthly meetings of the Circuit Counsellors for the discussion of the affairs of the District. By means of such meetings the Counsellors might very well become a threat to the place and power of a District President in his District.

With Circuit Counsellors impotent and at a harmless distance from district affairs, these District Presidents represent to the church and to the general public that they reflect Synod better than the President of Synod who alone was elected by Synod to be the chief executive officer of Synod and the chief supervisor of doctrine and life within Synod.

Now, without call or warrant from Synod, they have presumed by resolution to tell a Commission of Synod how to conduct its doctrinal evaluation. The CTCR must not make public its evaluation of the joint and contrived personal confessions of the faculty majority of the St. Louis Seminary—so these 22 District Presidents have voted.

How political these District Presidents are! Last September they piously asked the St. Louis seminary faculty to make their confessions, so that everyone in Synod might learn where they stand. The faculty leadership used this opportunity to join itself to the majority of the District Presidents for the purpose of giving the entire Synod its versions of the pernicious teaching at the St. Louis Seminary. Now the faculty majority and the 22 District Presidents fear that the CTCR would expose the St. Louis faculty statements for what they really are. Many who have studied those faculty publications (*Faithful to Our Calling, Faithful to Our Lord, Part I & II*) can see the evasions, the false doctrine, and hypocrisy revealed in those publications.

The 22 District Presidents are reported to have accepted the argument that Synod has not yet decided whether or not to endorse a literal interpretation of the Bible, whether or not to reject the Historical-Critical Method, whether or not to hold faculty members of the St. Louis Seminary to teach only and faithfully the doctrines upon which Synod was founded.

(Continued on Page 2)



## Abortion— Just A Start?

THESE are individuals who cite the recent Supreme Court decision as a triumph for religious liberty. In making this statement they are implying that opposition to abortion is a man-made rule originally within certain minority religious groups, and that we are now free from this shackle. Is this accusation true? It might be interesting to attempt to answer this question by looking at the abortion question from a purely logical or philosophical viewpoint, and putting the theological aside for the moment.

Within our society is found a rather general agreement concerning the sanctity of human life. We have an elaborate set of laws with the sole purpose of protecting that life. Murder evokes our highest penalties. Motorcyclists are required to wear helmets to protect their lives, and air bags may soon be compulsory in cars in order to preserve the lives of those unwilling to use voluntary means. We can all remember the revulsion we felt as we saw pictures of the Mai Lai massacre victims, particularly when the bodies of women and children were shown. Protests in the form of riots occurred after the Kent State killings. Demonstrators splashed blood in front of the White House in protest against a war which was claiming innocent lives in Viet Nam. No matter where we look, we see evidence that human life is regarded as having a certain sacredness which we as a society must protect. This is particularly true if the individual is young, helpless, or innocent.

The abortion question must then center on the definition of life. Here we must remain as objective as possible, or we can end up with a definition which is purely arbitrary, changed at will to suit the desires of an individual, a group or society. Therefore we will turn to science for our answer, where at least two possibilities can be found.

THE scientist has struggled for years to 'create' life. The intent is to combine certain basic elements so that a cell or organism will be brought into being which is able to divide and reproduce itself. The evolutionary theory is based upon the assumption that this once took place, and that from this basic cell all other life originated. In the human being this multiplication of cells commences when the sperm enters the egg, and fertilization takes place. The new life which here starts is distinct from the father and mother, and did not come into being until the sperm and egg united.

There is also another definition which may be used. Because of the legal need to protect the donor in the case of transplants, the medical profession has carefully defined the end of life. It is that moment when brain waves can no longer be detected. Using this criteria, life must therefore begin when these brain waves first appear. Using present day instruments, these waves can be detected during the first several weeks of pregnancy. Earlier discovery will undoubtedly be possible as instrument sensitivity is increased.

What are the implications of the Supreme Court decision in the light of these definitions? It means that the court's members have arbitrarily picked a point in the development cycle of the human being, and called that instant the beginning of life. They may not have stated this explicitly, but apparently they felt that no law prohibiting the taking of life was violated. They justify their decision by stating that no medical danger is involved in the abortion, and that the woman should have the right of decision as far as her body is concerned. No unwanted child should be born, especially if its life could cause economic hardship. As a Lutheran pastor stated in *Viewpoint* (LWR, 21 Feb. '71), we must help

men and women decide about the possible future existence of "... a child, which should not be asked to live unless it can be wanted, cared for, and loved."

IF this becomes the criterion, then we should also look at other places in society where people are living who are a burden, are unwanted, unloved, and often uncared for. What about the aged? Might it not be better to terminate a life when its productivity declines, when it becomes a burden, so often unwanted? Where is the logic when on one hand we desperately attempt to preserve the life of a person who has lived beyond normally defined usefulness, and on the other hand callously terminate the existence of an individual who has the potential of a full life before him?

The *Detroit Free Press* of March 5, 1973 had a column by Dr. Lindsay Curtis in which he described the 38 year old mother who, through testing of the amniotic fluid, found out that the child she was bearing was a girl. She immediately insisted on an abortion because they already had a boy and two girls. Why is it right to terminate a life just because the fetus happens to be a girl instead of a boy? How similar an attitude to that of 'uncivilized' tribes who place unwanted children in the jungle to die. Who will be next if this philosophy is allowed to prevail—the aged, the poor, the criminal, the minorities? It has happened before!

We as Christians have a task to perform. We know that it is God who gives human life its sacredness. It is He who declared "Thou shalt not kill." Unpopular as it may be, we have the responsibility to inform our society that taking human life is still a sin, even if that life is as yet unborn—and even if laws have made it legal.

We also have other obligations as followers of Christ. To the woman who has been deluded into believing that what is legal is also morally right—who has an abortion and now suffers remorse—to that person we must be ready to bring the message of God's forgiveness through His Son Jesus Christ. We must also be willing to provide and support guidance and counselling services as adequate as those now operated by the pro-abortion forces, but with the opposite thrust. We must be ready to assist the mother and father in making the child feel wanted and loved, helping them in every way possible. But above all, we must stand fast on God's Word, for it is only through the power of the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ that our basic selfish human nature can be changed, that society can be made aware of its responsibility to preserve the sanctity of life—for all, even the unborn.

Richard G. Korthals, Lay Evangelist  
Arcadia, Michigan

### **Destroy . . . (Continued from Page 1)**

It is now evident that 22 District Presidents have exposed themselves to the church as devoid of that moral leadership some of them have claimed for themselves. They have broadcast their claim for collegiality most diligently through the media. But Synod rejected their pretensions at Milwaukee. Undoubtedly, Synod will know how to tame these rebellious District Presidents at New Orleans as well in 1974, when their terms of office will expire. We shall await that verdict on this attempted power grab of the majority of the District Presidents.

Dr. Richard Klann  
Concordia Seminary  
St. Louis, Missouri



## An Open Letter

*The Editorial Group, after a thorough discussion of Dr. Scharlemann's "An Open Letter" and its sequel (to be printed on these pages next month), concluded that the contents of these letters deal with matters of enormous importance in the church. The Group has seen the documentation supporting these letters, discussed the matter with witnesses, and has been informed that the "faculty five," as they have come to be known, have brought these matters to the attention of the Seminary's Board of Control. These issues undoubtedly will be raised at the New Orleans Convention and dealt with through an appropriate committee. Since these issues are becoming public matters, the Editorial Group believes that Missouri should have information about them. In the opinion of the Group sufficient documentation supporting Dr. Scharlemann's position to warrant a full-scale hearing of this matter, of the gravest significance to the future of the church, does exist.*

DEAR Jim:

You asked about my "confession" not being in the recent documents sent out by the Seminary administration. The reason is quite simple: I was not asked. In fact, I did not know of this undertaking until I read about it in a LWF "Information" bulletin, which, by the way, gave more details than the *Lutheran Witness* did, including Dr. Klann's observation that the District Presidents really had no right to ask for such statements.

A few years ago, you may recall, the faculty issued its first "Statement." There were four people on leave at that time; but they were all asked for their vote. That may be of interest to consider under the present circumstances, when I was not even notified that such a project was being developed.

This does not mean that I regret not being represented in the "confessions." In fact, the whole thing was out of order to begin with, especially since the faculty refused to respond to the request of the President of Synod, who does have the responsibility for the supervision of doctrine. (The District Presidents do not, except insofar as they may be asked by the President to undertake some specific aspect of this responsibility for him.)

My own position was set forth in detail back in 1960 in response to the request of the President of Synod. You will find my statements in the December 16th issue of the *Lutheran Witness* from that year. When I point out this contrast: my gladly responding to Dr. Behnken's request to answer the questions that he raised and the faculty's apparently sullen and even intemperate refusal to do so—you will get some insight into the heart of the Seminary problem. Its administration thinks of itself as being above the law.

For example, why such fussing and fuming when a duly appointed committee of five was assigned to do the interviews which were used for the "Blue Book?" These five men are men in good standing in Synod. They are brethren; and yet at first the faculty tried to prevent the job from being done. Then it tried frustrating the operation and,

after that, it began to distort things. And yet the President of the Seminary was brazen enough to tell an open hearing at the Milwaukee Convention that the faculty had always fully cooperated!

YOU see, we are dealing with a situation created by what might be termed a totalitarian personality: one that decides on its own and by its own insights and for its own interests what truth is and what is not. By this time, as a result, most of the faculty has been completely influenced by this phenomenon. I'm not very confident, therefore, about the "confessions" which seem to accent the public relations aspect of the whole matter. That is the corruption, you see. That is part of what five of us have been saying for a long time. It is part of the same spirit of anarchy and insubordination to invite Mr. Ehlen to participate and to leave out Dr. Ralph Bohlmann, who lives about one-half block from the Seminary. This is sheer caprice; and the Seminary community has been poisoned by just this kind of thing for the past few years.

You have asked why this is not brought to the attention of the Board of Control. Well, believe me, it has been a number of times. It is part of the prevailing corruption that the majority of the Board has at no time within my experience shown the slightest sensitivity to this kind of ethical malfeasances.

Just imagine: The President of the Seminary took the occasion in at least two student assemblies (I was present) to attack the President of Synod at great length *in his absence!* Feature that: these students are not members of Synod; they are preparing to become pastors of Synod; and the administration of the school that is to train them, in a public meeting with these students, vilifies the President of the Synod! Yet that has been brought to the attention of the Board; and the reaction is exactly *nil*.

Even the most secular board that I can think of would manifest a greater sensitivity to such elementary ethical situations. In fact, I told the Board just that.

LET me illustrate this another way. It was agreed by the Board and us that our presentation to it would be available to no one, either on tape or in typewritten copy, except a few persons indicated. Yet just last month we got a request from the Board asking whether we would be willing to share all this with the faculty as a whole. Can you imagine? Well, that gives you some idea as to what an ethical quagmire prevails.

The only relief I see is some committee at the New Orleans Convention hearing our case and becoming aware of the most incredibly capricious and questionable operation that one could imagine—and ought not even expect to hear about in connection with a theological institution!

If you should have any further interest in the unhappy situation that prevails at the Seminary, then, maybe, next time I can write to you in detail about April 16, 1970, when the whole faculty—outside of four members present—was corrupted by one of the most totalitarian gimmicks!

For now it's enough.

Cordially,

(signed) Martin

Dr. Martin H. Scharlemann  
Nairobi University  
P.O. Box 3097  
Nairobi, Kenya

# To Sign or Not To Sign: A Time For Decision

"TO sign or not to sign, that is the question." This adaptation of Shakespeare is racing through Synod in response to the *Crossroads* letter. Sent to all pastors (congregations), its simple and declared purpose is to give our teachers and laymen an opportunity to indicate their support of synodical President Preus' *Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*.

Predictably, the appearance of *Crossroads* was greeted with Hallelujahs by many. As of March 22nd, 232,391 congregations and individual communicant members in Synod have endorsed it.

But there have also been great groans of pain, especially from those who tilt to the left of center on the theological scale, including the majority of St. Louis faculty members. The objections deserve our attention.

"To sign or not to sign" certainly is a question, but it is not the question. Ahead of the question whether one should sign must come the question of what is being signed. Here lies one objection to *Crossroads*.

Amazingly, there are some who flatly assert that the doctrinal content of the *Statement* is less than Lutheran and less than Scriptural. When one asks these objectors for specifics, they are hard to come by. And that tells us something.

Some, it seems, are either congenitally or by training averse to any theological statement that is simple, direct, explicit, and—horror of all horrors—understandable. Particularly obnoxious to such is the thought of an antithesis, of saying also what one does not believe, what one rejects.

There are other objectors. Some who accept the doctrinal content of the *Statement* somehow just don't like the idea of standing up to be counted. Melancthonians have always had the pipe dream that if one works long enough and hard enough and with enough good will there are no two positions that cannot somehow be reconciled.

BUT the Bible says otherwise. It abounds in calls to take a stand. We think of Moses and his "Who is on the Lord's side?" Of Joshua and his "choose you this day when ye will serve." Elijah's "How long halt ye between two opinions?" Our peaceful and peace-bringing Lord is also a divider: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword."

Also worth keeping in mind is the fact that some of our Lutheran Confessions were essentially calls to take a stand. The *Augsburg Confession*, read before Emperor Charles V on June 25, 1530 was signed by seven princes and the representatives of two free cities. All of them, mind you, were laymen!

The *Formula of Concord* (1577) was the last Confession before they were all put together in the *Book of Concord*, 1580. It was, indeed, a "formula of concord," i.e., a statement meant to achieve concord, peace, and harmony. But the formulators saw, as some do not today, that the way to concord lies in a clear and clean call to an agreed upon set of beliefs. Peace comes only when there is the clarity of a doctrinal position. It is theological confusion that promotes division.

So, as confessional Lutherans we remember the signers of the *Formula of Concord* with satisfaction and joy. We

praise the courage it took for the 8,188 signers to write, "In testimony whereof we have with one mind and heart subscribed our names."

TALK about taking a stand! This is Synod's 125th anniversary. As we call on each other to thank God and to renew our missionary zeal and to make thankofferings, are we not really thanking God that back in 1847 He gave some men and parishes the courage to take pen in hand and sign their adherence to a conservative Bible-based doctrinal position? If such signing is evil, then in this 125th year the call should be to the sackcloth of sorrow and the ashes of repentance.

If the *Crossroads* invitation to support the *Statement* is, as has been claimed, "a strong invitation for the members of our Synod to divide" and that it "breeds division, distrust, bitterness, slander, strife," then sharing in it are those Districts which are on record as supporting it. And the Springfield Seminary Board of Control. And Synod's CTCR. And our synodical President.

The plea that signing will divide us is under a further stricture. It reveals a serious lack of understanding precisely where we are in 1973. Ten or fifteen years ago there would have been merit in the plea for further discussion. Today is another matter. The two basically different doctrinal positions being held and taught within Synod are clear. The lines are long drawn for those who will see.

There is, indeed, a time to discuss. There is also a time to decide. Luther posted his 95 theses October 31, 1517. Thereupon debates, pamphlets, books and discussion went through the length and breadth of Christendom. Then came the Diet of Worms, 1521. A lone Augustinian monk—but speaking for thousands—stood up and was counted. "Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me."

It took less than four years to get from Wittenberg to Worms. Should not 10 years (and more) of discussion be enough for the Missouri Synod to make up its mind which way it wants to go?

The Rev. Ewald J. Otto, Pastor  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Quincy, Illinois

## Affirm

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## Electing A College President

A review of the procedure of electing Synod's Seminary and College presidents at the New Orleans Convention seems essential to unity and mission in the church. The method whereby a faculty committee—elected by the entire faculty—is empowered to choose only the nominees it favors and is subject to no control appears in retrospect to have placed an imbalance of power in faculty hands. Eminently qualified candidates nominated by a large number of congregations are never submitted for consideration to the electors. The recent attempts to elect a president of Concordia Senior College, Fort Wayne, failed until a third electoral meeting had been convened; nearly a year had elapsed. Theoretically this approach once seemed to be a sound approach in finding the most qualified men and electing them, but in practice it has given birth to tensions which are unhealthy.

It is clear that this synodical process does not conform to generally observable practices in the world of higher education today. Selecting such presidents seems to fall into a relatively simple pattern. A search committee composed of faculty, student and Board of Regents representatives make a study of the candidates being considered and submits its findings for use by the electing agency. The Board of Regents (comparable to our Board of Control) subsequently elects the president.

Presently in many states, coordinating boards representing a system of colleges and universities are becoming increasingly powerful. Comparable to our Board for Higher Education, they may conceivably be granted electoral responsibility. The Missouri Synod election method runs 180° counter to this trend.

The kind of power accorded our faculty majorities in these matters is almost unheard of. The rejection of properly nominated and qualified candidates by fiat demonstrates a "veto" power by the faculty majority which may frustrate and defeat the function of our electors.

THIS heterogeneous system becomes all the more bewildering in view of the evident concern of both the American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church of America for strong representation of the total church in this crucial matter.

The American Lutheran Church until recently elected Seminary presidents on the floor of the synod's convention. (Dr. Kent Knutson was elected president of Wartburg Seminary, Dubuque, at the Omaha convention in 1968.)

Its new method (TALC) begins with a call for nominations. Any man who qualifies may also offer himself as a candidate. The nominating committee includes the Bishop of the church, the chairman of the Church Council and one pastoral member of that group (akin to our Board of Directors), the chairman and Executive Director of the Board of Theological Education (similar to our Board for Higher Education), the chairman of the Board of Regents of the school involved, plus a faculty member (elected by faculty) and a student (elected by students of the school). It is committed to study all nominees, to prepare vitae on all of them and submit this complete file to the elections committee. The committee may also state its recommendations as to a preferred candidate or candidates.

The elections committee includes the same group augmented by seven members of the Church Council (Board of Directors), the balance of members of the nine member Board of Theological Education, and the entire Board of Regents (Board of Control) of the school. Each person has a vote, a majority of three-fourths is necessary for an election. While it is possible for members of the nominating committee to defeat a candidate in the voting, it seems inconceivable that a "special interest" power play could ever elect a president.

THE Lutheran Church in America likewise begins the election process with a search committee developing characterizations and screening of proposed nominees. It includes the President of the church body and the President of the Synod (District) involved and the Board of Regents or Control elects the five to seven members not designated. The committee interviews the men, assembles information and reduces the number of candidates to ten or eleven. The final nomination step is to reduce the number to two or three nominees by a fine-tooth comb process and to submit these names to the electors. Thereupon, the election of the new president by the Board of Directors (Board of Control) of the Seminary follows.

Far from enhancing Synod's system of producing ministers and teachers of the Gospel as those who were prime-movers in the transitional days of our burgeoning higher educational system envisioned it, the result of Missouri's election process has been chaotic and degenerative. Members of Synod find reason to be alarmed by terminology like "disenfranchisement," "loss of ownership rights," etc. Recent Seminary and College president election difficulties tend to support the church's concern. The partisan movement, remolding the doctrinal implications of synodical membership, has apparently discovered a political super-weapon.

The church at New Orleans must allow the time for exhaustive and decisive deliberation, she must ward off the demagoguery and reject the ruses of individuals involved in, or enlisted for, the pro-faculty majority process who will blandly assert again that the faculty committee merely investigates and screens.

Informed and thorough delegates will not be hood-winked. If time is running out for Missouri—pray God that it is not—the only hope for regaining her confessional integrity before God and men must include simple but effective improvements in the present process to eliminate the possibility of conscienceless and deadly partisan power politics in the temple of God.

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# A Word of Encouragement From The Evangelical Lutheran Synod

THIS article has been written for *Affirm* for the purpose of giving encouragement and support to those who are still laboring for the cause of confessional Lutheranism within the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. It comes from the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, a former sister-synod of the LC-MS. Again and again our ELS has expressed its desire to communicate such a message to its former brethren and we sincerely appreciate the opportunity to do this through the pages of *Affirm*. As we view the fact that an historic battle seems to be about to take place at the forthcoming convention of the LC-MS we wish to let it be known that we are earnestly praying for those who staunchly defend the historic Lutheran faith.

Permit me to quote some of the actions of our ELS which would verify our desire to give such encouragement. At its 1971 Synodical Convention, held at Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minnesota the following resolution was adopted: "WHEREAS, The Confessional deterioration throughout much of Lutheranism often places faithful confessors in a position of battling against great odds within their own circles, and WHEREAS, In such a struggle there is often need of and room for the encouragement and support of those who share these concerns, as we ourselves have learned from our own history, therefore, a) BE IT RESOLVED, That we give earnest heed to the resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum urging us to encourage and support concerned members of other Lutheran synods in their confessional battles by, 1) Seeking to make personal contact with them, 2) Inviting them as guests to conventions and conferences in our midst, 3) Sending them literature we may deem helpful, including our *Lutheran Sentinel* and *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, 4) Being ready to accept invitations to set forth our Synod's confessional position and the Scriptural basis for it, and, b) BE IT RESOLVED, That we request the officers of our Synod to continue to take the initiative in laboring for a realignment of Lutherans who wish to remain faithful to God's Word" (*Synod Report*, 1971, pages 45-46).

At the 1970 Convention of the ELS the following resolution also expresses our feelings. "BE IT RESOLVED, That we note with gratitude the growing number of those within the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod who 'labor for realignment of Lutherans faithful to the Lutheran Confessions' (*Synod Report*, 1955, p. 46), a goal which our Synod has longed for since 1955" (*Synod Report*, 1970, p. 42).

THE Evangelical Lutheran Synod first began practicing fellowship with the LC-MS back in the later 1850's before the founding of the Synodical Conference in 1872. It was a member of the Synodical Conference from its beginning, and participated in the wonderful work of that body for many years. When the ELS had to re-organize and start over again in 1918, when it could not go along with a merger of three large Norwegian church bodies, it received strong encouragement and support from its brethren in the LC-MS. For many years the pastors of the ELS were trained at LC-MS schools until the founding of our own seminary in 1946. Nearly half of the pastors presently serving in the ELS are graduates of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. The ELS therefore realizes that it owes a real debt of gratitude to the LC-MS. It was therefore a very sad day when it had to de-

cide that it could no longer walk together in fellowship with Missouri after such a long and harmonious relationship.

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod today, by the grace of God stands where "old Missouri" stood under such great leaders as Walther and Pieper. It holds firmly to the teachings of conservative, orthodox, evangelical Lutheranism. It confesses the Holy Scriptures to be the true and inerrant Word of God, verbally inspired by the Holy Ghost. It holds that the Scriptures are infallible also when they deal with historical, geographical and scientific matters. It rejects the conclusions of the so-called Historical-Critical Method of Bible interpretation as an unwarranted and arbitrary dealing with the sacred Scriptures. It holds to the statement of Scripture that God created all things in six days, as taught in Genesis 1 and 2 and elsewhere in Scripture and thus rejects the theory of evolution. Especially does the ELS emphasize that, in order to rescue fallen mankind, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world, clothed in human flesh, true God and true Man in one Person. By His righteousness and by His innocent suffering, death and resurrection Jesus has redeemed the entire world. The ELS also believes that the Scriptures require that church fellowship shall be built upon the full confession of the true doctrines of the Word.

OUR Evangelical Lutheran Synod is not large in comparison to other church bodies. The Lord, however, has blessed the preaching of the Word in our midst also. A number of home mission congregations are supported by the Synod in the midwest as well as on both coasts. In 1968 the Synod began doing foreign mission work in Lima, Peru. Here hundreds of thousands of people who live around the city in so-called "barriadas" are in desperate need of the pure Gospel. At the present time we have two missionaries and one lay worker on the field. The work has expanded to include several mountain villages as well. Two nationals are studying for the ministry under the supervision of the missionaries. The other foreign fields of the ELS are in San Jose, Costa Rica where work has just begun and also in Managua, Nicaragua where there are four mission stations in operation.

The Synod also owns and operates Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota. Bethany is a liberal arts junior college which can help young people prepare for almost any field they wish to enter. The college has achieved "candidate status" with the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

The pastors of the ELS are trained at Bethany Lutheran Seminary also in Mankato. For almost 30 years this "school of the prophets" has provided the necessary works to fill the pulpits of the ELS congregations.

With this article, then, we express the fervent prayer that the Lord will give strength and zeal to those who are earnestly contending for the historic Lutheran faith within the Missouri Synod. We sympathize with you in your struggle. We urge you to stand fast for the truth. And at the same time we must add the earnest admonition that the time comes when those who love the truth must separate themselves from those who would continue to teach and tolerate error.

The Rev. George M. Orvick, President  
Evangelical Lutheran Synod  
Madison, Wisconsin

# The Double Standard of Some District Presidents

DEAR Brother in Christ,

Some of my colleagues on the Council of Presidents have from time to time issued commentaries to the pastors of their Districts on resolutions of the Council. I do not fault them for this, though for several reasons I have refrained from this kind of communication. I feel now however that I must share with you some of my thoughts on the recent meeting of the Council, and for several reasons.

Many of you have asked me about newspaper reports of the Council meeting, especially regarding the article in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* which says in part: "The council's move this week indicates an attempt to establish itself as an independent counterforce against the conservative-minded Dr. Preuss (sic), who is up for re-election as president this summer." Incidentally I am informed that our Public Relations Department was by-passed in channeling news of the Council's action to the press, this in spite of the fact that we as a Council recently asked PR representatives to be present at all meetings so that ethical procedure for dissemination of news might be followed in the interest of harmony and peace within the church.

This letter is also prompted by the serious nature of the issues discussed by the Council as they relate to the wider controversy in our Synod. And what follows are primarily excerpts from statements made to my brothers on the Council. For that reason I am also sharing this letter with them.

IN special session, called after what was supposedly the final business meeting of the Council, and after one of the principals in the matter in question had gone home, the following resolution was adopted by a vote of 22-12 (there are 44 members in the Council):

We respectfully request that the CTCR reconsider its decision to evaluate the faculty statements, unless it wants to do this on a purely "personal help basis" for those District Presidents who have requested the evaluation. We make this recommendation, not in denial of anyone's right to request help from the CTCR, but because any public statement coming from the CTCR in regard to the faculty statements may be interpreted as a definitive evaluation, good or bad, by the church.

We assure the faculty that the Council of Presidents desires to keep and fulfill its agreement with the faculty on the basis of the instructions given to it by President R.A. Haak, namely, that "the professors and the church regard this exercise as an opportunity to edify the church" (see September, 1972 resolution) and that for this purpose "each District President use his own discretion in the use of the individual statements requested at our last meeting on the specific issues as outlined in the September resolution" (see November, 1972 resolution).

We recognize that the brothers on the Council whose names are affixed to "Crossroads" permitted this to be done in good conscience and with no intent to be divisive by their action. We also recognize that, at least in some cases, those whose names appear were not fully aware of the ultimate intended use of "Crossroads." We also recognize

that, in the opinion of some other members of the Council, the use of "Crossroads" does appear to be divisive.

With respect to the conscience and ministry of all concerned, the committee suggests that we review the statements and applications of the "Statement on Ethics," as they might apply not only to this situation, but also to all other instances of unsolicited circularization of the Synod, and that we request one another in the Council that we refrain from participating in the unsolicited circulation of the general Synod, and the indiscriminate seeking of signatures.

Several remarks are in order regarding *Crossroads*. One has to do with the selective indignation of the Council. When *Christian News* broadcasts the troubles of the church, the Council repudiates the publication. When other periodicals, written by members of Synod, publicly marshal anti-administration forces for New Orleans, members of the Council are privately encouraged to "deal pastorally" with the situation. When "A Call to Openness and Trust" is thrust upon the church, no resolution is forthcoming. When *Crossroads* appears, the Council makes an appeal against "unauthorized solicitation" of the church. When the President is maligned, the Council is strangely silent. When the President is supported, the Council decries polarization.

True, "all other instances" of unauthorized solicitation are condemned in the resolution, but significantly it is *Crossroads* which stirred the Council to action. And only *Crossroads* is named. It is this basic inconsistency in applying Christian ethics that prompted me, in the November 1972 meeting, to make a matter of record my disassociation from the repudiation of *Christian News*.

THE whole question of supporting the theological position of the President, which is the historic position of our Synod (one "moderate" publication calls it the "Pieper-Preuss" position), also needs airing in this connection. Not once in recent years has the Council expressed to the church confidence in the President. Council members have pleaded with him in our sessions to give them a vote of confidence when their allegiance to Scriptures and the Confessions has been called into question. The Council however has not shown him similar courtesy. And in the November 1972 meeting the Council was unwilling, though a resolution to that effect was offered, to do what the CTCR had previously done, namely, acknowledge that the President's *Statement* contains nothing contrary to the Scriptures and the Confessions—this, although the accusation by the St. Louis faculty that his theology is "sub-biblical" and "un-Lutheran" still stands.

Now, when some of my brothers in the Council, in anguish because of these accusations and frustrated by the Council's apparent unwillingness to declare the President orthodox, have used *Crossroads* as a vehicle for expressing themselves to the church, they are pointed to the "Statement on Ethics."

As for that part of the resolution which asks the CTCR not to make a public evaluation of what the faculty chose to circularize throughout Synod, I suggested in our meeting that such a resolution would "make interesting reading in

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## The Charismatic Movement: Spiritual Power or Power of Spirit?

THE charismatic or neo-pentecostal movement has great spiritual power. This was quite evident at the First International Conference on the Holy Spirit, which met last August in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The conference was one sign of the movement's rapid growth among Lutherans. Several thousands of people, Lutherans, Protestants, Roman Catholics, gathered to praise Jesus, be exhorted to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, attend workshops, be healed of their diseases, have their spiritual emptiness filled, listen to Lutheran, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, and Presbyterian speakers, and buy many thousands of dollars worth of books and tapes on charismatic doctrines and practices.

The spiritual power of the charismatic movement was specifically directed to the concern for edification, that is, being built up or strengthened. Many references were made to the spiritual impotence of many Lutheran and other Christian congregations and to the emptiness in the lives of individual Christians. For life in a rapidly changing, confusing, and fragmenting world plagues many Christians with an inner hunger, void, and uncertainty. At the conference the spiritual power of the charismatic movement was directed to meet this psychological need and was very evident in the thousands of voices praising Jesus in English, singing in tongues, and in the public smiles, embraces, and words of love and praise the main speakers gave to one another and other leading participants.

The question that must be asked is, "What is the source of this spiritual power?" The charismatics claim that the Holy Spirit is the source of this power. Let us examine this claim particularly in view of the words, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not God. This is the spirit of antichrist, of which you heard that it was coming, and now it is in the world already" (1 John 4:1-3). In order to test the spirits let us consider the doctrine and practice of the charismatics at the First International Conference on the Holy Spirit, which your author attended. First, let us consider the practice of tongues speaking and prophecy, and then the doctrines of salvation and of the person of Jesus Christ.

TO understand the practice the setting must be considered. While there was a formal worship service, a eucharistic service, only on the last morning of the conference, the singing of hymns, prayers, tongues, Bible studies, prophecies, sermon lectures, exhortations, and praising of Jesus certainly made it abundantly clear that the conference assembly was worshipping. One evening a Lutheran leader zealously admonished the people to receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, began singing in a tongue, and exhorted the assembly to join in singing in tongues, which the people did. The result was cacophany. This is in clear contradiction to the words of the apostle commanding orderliness, "For God is not a God of confusion but of peace" (1 Corinthians 14:33). Furthermore, at least nine times women spoke in tongues, interpreted tongues, prophesied, or lead in prayer the plenary sessions. This clearly contradicts the apostle's prohibition of

women speaking in the assemblies of the church (1 Corinthians 14:33-34). Thus, in two special ways the practice contradicted the Scriptures of the Holy Spirit.

The doctrine of salvation is clearly seen in the emphasis made several times that the gift of tongues is available for every Christian, which is not what the Spirit teaches (1 Corinthians 12:4-11, especially 11). For the Spirit gives what gifts He wishes to whom He wishes. Several leaders stated that to be saved one must first believe the forgiveness of sins offered through Jesus Christ, but then they immediately added that a person should go on to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. This baptism is shown by the gift of tongues. According to this view it is not sufficient for salvation to have saving faith that trusts in the obedient life and suffering of Jesus Christ for man. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit shown by the gift of tongues must be added to saving faith. This is superchristianity. Another leader said in regard to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and evidently against some detractors of the charismatic movement, "We do not want more than Jesus, we want more of Jesus." This denies Paul's statement that we have come to fullness in Him in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily (Colossians 2:9-10). Furthermore, this statement obliterates the distinction between the Son of God and the Spirit of God.

THIS speaker further evidenced a doctrine of superchristianity in a major address. He said that contrary to their claim most Christians consider economic matters more important than spiritual. For they do not decide first what congregation the Lord wants them to join and then what job the Lord wants them to have. They decide in the reverse manner. He said that the true way was shown by some who asked the Lord what congregation to join. The Lord then told them to join the speaker's church, so they quit their jobs, moved across the country, and joined his church. Then they found what jobs they could. Such a view calls into question the doctrine of Christian vocation, which is closely connected to the doctrines of salvation and justification.

Another aspect of the charismatic doctrine of salvation is its teaching on synergism. Synergism means that out of his own power the will of man is able to work with the Spirit in conversion and in maintenance of Christian faith and life. Regarding being baptized in the Holy Spirit one speaker said, "God is not keeping us waiting, we are keeping God waiting. Man is finally (in the charismatic movement) moving with God's Spirit today. Today man is responding to God. God's Spirit has been upon us for years, but we have not been responding. God has been waiting for you to allow Him to move you" (emphasis added). Exhorting the conference to receive the Baptism of the Spirit a Lutheran speaker said, "You received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit by faith. You only open your heart. God won't usurp the authority of your will. Just will to follow the spirit instead of the flesh" (emphasis added). Paul clearly teaches that the will and mind of the unbeliever is dead in sin and opposes God in spiritual things, and that the believer's will works with God only from God's gracious power and not from man's ability (Ephesians 2:1-10, Romans 8:7-8, Philippians 2:12-13).

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# The Biblical Doctrine of Original Sin

IN the section captioned "Discussion Two: God's Creation and Human Beings" of the booklet titled *Faithful to Our Calling, Faithful to Our Lord: Part I, A Witness to Our Faith, A Joint Statement and Discussion of Issues*, pages 15-17, the faculty majority at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, sets forth (among other things) its understanding of the Bible's teaching on the subject of original sin. A careful consideration of the faculty's statements on these pages leads to the observation that some of the views expressed appear to be at variance with aspects of plain Biblical instruction and traditional Lutheran belief in this area of doctrine.

Lutherans have traditionally held and taught that all men are born with "original sin." This means that all human beings come into this world having Adam's first sin and the guilt of that sin charged by God to their account; that all men are, therefore, also subject to the divinely assigned penalties for Adam's sin—spiritual death, physical mortality, and eternal death and damnation in hell. Original sin, our theologians have said, embraces what may be termed "hereditary guilt" (the guilt of the one sin of Adam which God imputes to every individual of our race) and "hereditary corruption," the evil nature and condition of spiritual death which, as the result of the imputation of Adam's guilt, are transmitted to all his posterity through natural descent from the first sinful parents, Adam and Eve. In the state of hereditary corruption every person is, on the one hand, totally bereft of any good quality, power, or righteousness, and, on the other, actively and persistently inclined to all manner of wickedness. A man's hereditary corruption is the fountain-source of all the actual sins which he perpetrates—all his violations of God's holy law in thought, word, and deed, by way of omission and commission.

A SCRIPTURE passage which teaches original guilt is Romans 5:12-19, particularly these words: "Therefore, as through one man (Adam, according to context) sin came into the world and death through sin, even so death passed on to all men, because all sinned" (in Adam, with God regarding Adam's deed as their deed), verse 12; "because of the trespass of the one man the many died," verse 15; "through the trespass of one man there was condemnation for all men," verse 18; "through the disobedience of the one man the many were constituted sinners," verse 19. The hereditary corruption transmitted by natural birth is taught in passages like Psalm 51:5, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me," and John 3:6, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (with the term "flesh" signifying the sinful human nature); compare Gen. 8:21; Eph. 2:3; I Cor. 2:14.

The Lutheran Confessions speak of original sin in this manner (for example):

And first, it is true that Christians should regard and recognize as sin not only the actual transgression of God's commandments; but also that the horrible, dreadful hereditary malady by which the entire nature is corrupted should above all things be regarded and recognized as sin indeed, yea, as the chief sin, which is a root and fountain-head of all actual sins. And by Dr. Luther it is called a nature-sin or person-sin, thereby to indicate that, even though a person would think, speak, or do nothing evil (which, however, is impossible in this life, since the fall of our first parents), his nature and person

are nevertheless sinful, that is, thoroughly and utterly infected and corrupted before God by original sin, as by a spiritual leprosy; and on account of this corruption and because of the fall of the first man the nature or person is accused or condemned by God's Law, so that we are by nature the children of wrath, death, and damnation, unless we are delivered therefrom by the merit of Christ. (*Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, I, 5-6*).

It may be noted that the expression "original sin" does not appear in the Scriptures but is one which has been coined by the church; yet it denotes doctrine which is thoroughly Scriptural. One writer has commented: "Original sin is so called a) because it is derived from Adam, the root and beginning of the human race; b) because it is connected with the origin of the descendants of Adam; and c) because it is the original and fountain of all actual transgressions."

THE St. Louis faculty majority's discussion of original sin properly speaks of the deep-seated corruption of all human nature; of "our native inability to love God and trust in Him, coupled with an inclination to evil that even Christians can never fully conquer in this life" (page 15). However, the following selected statements of "Discussion Two" give pause for thought and concern. "We know ourselves to be sinners because God's Word designates us as such, not by virtue of any rational argument that links our guilt with the guilt of our first parents" (page 15). Also:

Many within our Synod hold that these chapters (Genesis 2-3) are a literal historical account of the lives of two specific individuals known as Adam and Eve. Those who hold this position recognize that the message of the text deals with our native sinfulness. Our corruption is a reality that is as true for us as it was for our first parents (page 16).

Others in our Synod maintain that Genesis 2-3 is not an eyewitness report or a historical account similar to modern historical annals . . . The writer of Genesis 2-3 is proclaiming the truth about Everyman (*ha'adam*, "the man") and every woman (Eve, "Mother of all that live"). The intended addressee in this narrative is first of all Israel. In Adam and Eve all the men and women of Israel could see themselves. But we too are addressed, for in that account our native sinfulness is revealed (pages 16-17).

The message remains the same whether we consider the text of Genesis 2-3 a literal historical account or some other kind of literature. Our corruption is as true for us as it was for the fallen parents of the human race (page 17).

Regardless of which position we take about the kind of literature found in Genesis 2-3, it is important for our preaching and teaching in the church to recognize that our sinfulness is our own fault. For in the Old Testament, Israel is held responsible for its own crimes and corruption. In Romans 5, moreover, while Paul states that sin and death enter the world through one man, he makes it clear that the universal spread of sin and death takes place "because all men sin" (v. 12). In line with

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# The Historical-Critical Method and The Reliability of The Genesis Narratives

**T**HOUSANDS of congregations in the three major bodies of Lutheranism are being exposed to the use and the conclusions of the Historical-Critical Method. The use of this method is at present a primary bone of contention in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The Grammatico-Historical Method which was employed in Lutheranism from its inception and followed in Synod for the past 125 years is now being replaced by scholars using the Historical-Critical Method. The latter had its origin with the opponents and detractors of historical Biblical Christianity. A leading theologian of the Lutheran Church in America wrote: "It is an undeniable fact that the historical-critical method is a legacy of Protestant liberalism" (*New Directions in Theology Today*, Volume II, History and Hermeneutics, p. 34).

The use of the Historical-Critical Method rejects basic hermeneutical principles as employed by the authors of the various Lutheran confessions found in *The Book of Concord* of 1580. A warfare is being conducted within the LC-MS against the heretofore accepted type of hermeneutics set forth by Pastor Victor Mennicke in his article "Bible Interpretations," Volume II in *The Abiding Word*, which contains essays depicting the doctrinal stance of the LC-MS at its hundredth birthday in 1947. Our lay people are being told that the Historical-Critical Method can be employed, provided one utilizes it with Lutheran presuppositions. The average layman in our churches does not realize the great complexity of this method which requires not only textual and literary criticism, but form, tradition, redaction and content criticism. In contrast to Pastor Mennicke's position the Old Testament scholar Kuemmel in *Exegetical Method, a Student's Handbook* states that unless the Biblical interpreter employs literary, form criticism and tradition criticism his understanding of the history of Israel will be "amateurish" (p.24).

In the past the theological leaders of the LC-MS opposed the use of the Historical-Critical Method because it made the Word of God unreliable by questioning its clear assertions and statements. *The Concordia Cyclopedia*, edited by three former professors of St. Louis, L. Fuerbringer, Th. Engelder and P. E. Kretzmann, and published by Concordia in 1927, contains an article treating of higher criticism. *The Cyclopedia* asserted: "Higher Criticism, by an alleged scientific study of the origin, the dates, and the literary structure of the books of the Bible, has operated with theories which tend to subvert the very foundations of belief in the Bible." (italics are the author's). In the same article, in describing the purpose of higher criticism in use then, it states: "But the exponents of the Higher Criticism as we now know it have a different objective. They were frankly enlisted on the side of unbelief, and the avowed intention of them was to change the attitude of believers toward the Bible from one of trust and confidence to one of distrust and doubt" (p.323).

**T**HE successor of the *Concordia Cyclopedia* may be said to be the *Lutheran Cyclopedia* of 1954 (also published by Concordia) and edited by Dr. Erwin Lueker. Dr. W. Roehrs in an article in *Lutheran Cyclopedia* dealing with "Higher Criticism" averred: "Today, however, the term higher criticism is usually not used in a neutral meaning. Most recent

scholars who engage in this study ignore and directly deny the unequivocal statements of the Bible which bear on the questions of authorship and origin of the various books. Because of this negative approach to the Bible the term 'higher criticism' today has a connotation of unbelief and denial of the truth as set down in Scripture" (p.466).

One fact rings out crystal clear in the critical literature of Lutherans and non-Lutherans practicing the Historical-Critical Method, namely, that the Bible is not dependable in its portrayal of Biblical history. Thus Professor B. W. Anderson in *Rediscovering the Bible* wrote: "The application of the method of historical criticism has greatly facilitated our task of interpretation. It has liberated us from the false notion that we are dealing with a completely accurate record of the past, a record which describes what actually and literally happened in all cases" (p.43). Another practitioner of the Historical-Critical Method, Professor R. C. Dentan of Yale Divinity School, in his book *The Design of the Scriptures* asserted that the "first eleven chapters of Genesis are composed for the most part of stories drawn from the ancient Hebrew myths or folklore." However, Luther, the Lutheran Confessions, and Lutherans of all groups in this century believed that in Genesis 1-11 the Holy Spirit through Moses has given mankind reliable information on the following subjects: the creation of the cosmos, the earth, animal life (marine, arboreal and land), a detailed account of the creation of Adam and Eve, the stay of the first human beings in Paradise, the institution of marriage, their fall into sin, the first fratricide, the genealogy of the descendants of Cain (Ch.4), descendants of Adam through Seth (Ch.5), conditions leading to the Flood, the Noahic Flood followed by the Noahic Covenant, the Table of Nations, the Confusion of Languages and the Call of Abram. Events and persons recorded in these chapters are also alluded to in other Old and New Testament books where they are considered dealing with historical persons and events.

**C**LAUS Westermann, a Lutheran, in his book *A Thousand Years and a Day* agrees with the position that we do not have reliable history in the first section of Genesis as may be seen from his statement: "The first chapters of the Bible were never intended to do what is, in fact, impossible for them; namely, give a historical or scientific description of the origin of the world and the human race. They are the product of a confession—that God is the Creator of the world and the Lord of history." (p.2).

**P**ROFESSOR Fretheim of Luther Seminary, St. Paul, in a recent Tower Book, *Creation, Fall and Flood* (Augsburg, 1969) tells his readers that chapters 1-11 do not record reliable history. While he admits that the Old Testament writers used history they were not, however, concerned with giving an exact picture of "what actually happened" (p.30). His position is clear: "One of the implications of this is that we today (as historians) cannot consider as factual which we find in Genesis 1-11" (p.31). Fretheim's book reflects the Documentary Hypothesis which assumes contradictions and

(Continued on Page 11)

## Genesis . . . (Continued from Page 10)

errors in the Biblical narratives. He also espoused in part the position of Gunkel on Genesis, who believed that all of Genesis was to be considered as containing different types of "Sagen" or legends.

Genesis 12-50 is also attacked by some critical scholars. Thus Dr. Dentan claims that "from the literary point of view, the story of Abraham marks the transition from the literary point of view, from the sphere of myth to that of quasi-historical legend. While we cannot be sure that Abraham was a real figure, yet in broad outline the story of his life is one that might have happened" (*The Design of Scriptures*, p. 7). Professor Hooke in his exposition on Genesis in Peake's *Commentary on the Bible* asserted: "Now the sagas of Genesis are certainly not history" (p. 186).

The foregoing quotations from proponents of the Historical-Critical Method substantiate what was written in the *Concordia Cyclopaedia* article already referred to: "Some of the chief exponents of Higher Criticism have made statements like the following: 'We no longer believe that a Bible statement is necessarily true, because it is a Bible statement.' 'No belief, however Scripture may be able to prove it, can claim the serious attention of thoughtful men and women today merely because it is Scriptural.' 'There is not, either in the Church or in the Bible, any infallible authority for doctrinal truth, and we should face the fact'" (p. 323).

The same type of evidence can be furnished regarding the rejection of historical facts and assertions by Historical-Critical scholars in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, I & II Samuel and I & II Chronicles. Since the Historical-Critical Method repeatedly rejects clear Biblical statements of the Old Testament, this method is not only a "risk" but it is detrimental to a proper understanding of God's Word.

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## Doctrine . . . (Continued from Page 9)

Paul's argument, it is also necessary for us to recognize that we share in the sin and death of the first human beings, regardless of how we interpret the details of Genesis 3 (page 17).

On the basis of the above declarations the judgment seems to be warranted that the faculty, "while not denying the possibility that Adam and Eve were historical persons and that the Fall was a real space-time event, clearly inclines to the opinion that they were not" (*Christianity Today*, "More Fog Over St. Louis" 2/2/73). In accepting or allowing for the latter view the faculty does not uphold the teaching of Scripture and the Confessions that a historical person Adam lived at the beginning of human history and through his transgression plunged the race into ruin. In asserting that Genesis 2-3 reveals our native corruption and culpability before God the faculty denies the obvious intent of these chapters, to present the account of Adam and Eve's fall into sin, their corruption, and their punishment.

**F**URTHERMORE, in stressing (in the above quotations) individual human responsibility for sin and corruption and averring that according to Romans 5 the universal spread of sin and death takes place "because all men sin" (present tense—a mistranslation of the Greek verb in 5:12, which should be rendered "sinned," in the past tense, and understood as pointing to the fact that God regards all men as having sinned when Adam sinned), the St. Louis professors

certainly appear to reject the Biblical instruction concerning hereditary guilt (compare the above passages from Romans; see *Formula of Concord Solid Declaration*, 1, 6, 9, 17 *Small-cald Articles*, III,I, 1). In this connection it should be observed that nowhere in Discussion Two, regrettably, is the doctrine of hereditary guilt set forth or affirmed. This, too, then, must be regarded as a serious deficiency in the faculty treatment of the doctrine of original sin.

The foregoing comments are made, it may be stated, in response to the faculty's indication that in the "Discussions of Issues" section of their publication a responsible set of statements is provided "suitable for use in discussion forums throughout Synod" (page 12).

A concluding note may be added. Since many of the St. Louis professors employ the Historical-Critical Method (with its skeptical treatment of many matters of Biblical revelation) in the interpretation of Scripture, it is no surprise that they question the historicity of the events described in Genesis 2-3, "shy away" from Paul's clear teaching concerning original sin in Romans 5, and, as a result, offer a deficient explanation of the latter important doctrine. This should serve to illustrate the danger of the use of radical Historical-Critical methodology in Biblical interpretation.

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## SPECIAL OFFER

This month *Affirm* will publish a special collection of scholarly essays on the Historical-Critical Method and its meaning for Bible interpretation. This collection, *Occasional Papers*, will feature articles by such widely-known and respected scholars as Dr. Horace D. Hummel, Dr. Richard Klann, Dr. K. Marquart, Dr. Robert Preus and Dr. Martin Scharlemann and will detail the full case against the Historical-Critical Method and the strong case for the traditional method of Bible interpretation in common use until recently in Missouri.

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**Charismatic . . .** (Continued from Page 8)

THE superchristianity and the synergism of the charismatics severely call into question their claim of spiritual power from the Holy Spirit. Paul opposed the superchristianity of men who commanded that circumcision was necessary in addition to faith in Christ (Galatians). Luther opposed the superchristianity of the Roman church that works must be added to faith as a basis of salvation. Can we do less than Paul and Luther? Furthermore, the synergism of the charismatics shows that essentially their doctrine of salvation differs little from the church of Rome. It is no wonder that priests, nuns, bishops, and even the pope look favorably upon the charismatic movement.

Finally the doctrine of the person of Jesus Christ taught by the charismatics must be examined. This is most important because of the claim of the charismatics to be praising and glorifying Jesus. A Lutheran speaker said in his speech on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, "Jesus did not do his miracles in the power of his own divinity but in the power of the Spirit." Referring to Philippians 2:7, "(Christ) emptied himself," he then said that the theologians should learn what this means. What he means was made clear by the conference chairman, a Lutheran pastor, in his closing sermon. Referring to Jesus he said, "When God came down out of heaven, he emptied himself of his divinity and became man."

The author personally checked with both of these Lutheran pastors on what they had said to avoid misunderstanding them. The first speaker affirmed that the above quotation was what he had said and meant. The conference chairman replied that he meant, "What we learned in the seminary. That Jesus emptied himself of his Godhead." (If I had not heard this with my own ears, it would be difficult to believe a Lutheran had said this.) This is not what is taught in a confessional Lutheran seminary as the truth of Scripture. This is a false teaching known as kenoticism, or emptying. The phrase in Philippians 2:7 regarding emptying means that Jesus according to His human nature did not always or fully use the divine attributes that his divine nature shares with his human nature. In short this charismatic teaching denies that while suffering and dying Jesus was God. This teaching says that only a man died on the cross, not the God-man. Thus, Jesus could not pay for our sins, for no mere man can satisfy the wrath of God. However, the Son of God, who was always and is God, became a man so that His blood may cleanse us from all sin (I John 1:7). Testing the spirits we learn the source of the spiritual power of the charismatic

movement. We have learned that their doctrine and practice contradict the Scriptures that the Holy Spirit gave us. Thus, we conclude that this spiritual power has a source in a spirit that is not the Spirit of God. John tells us who that spirit is: the spirit of the antichrist (I John 4:3).

Therefore, brethren, beware, warn, and pray lest we fall into delusion and that the deluded may be rescued from their darkness.

The Rev. N. Alfred Balmer  
Luther High School South  
Chicago, Illinois

**Presidents . . .** (Continued from Page 7)

the church." Indeed it has! Since the news release has appeared, laymen and pastors alike have asked me, "Is the Council really that much afraid of these faculty statements? Are the statements really that bad that they do not want them scrutinized by that commission specified by the By-Laws of Synod to engage itself in that very kind of study?"

This whole business leaves me more sad than angry. For it seems to me that the Council has become one of the most divisive groups within Synod. It has projected itself into the business of the synodical President, the business of the Fact-Finding Committee, the business of the Board of Control, and now, with its most recent resolutions, is in danger of becoming what some of its members have accused the CTCR of being, a curia that arbitrates every squabble in the church and pronounces judgment by majority vote.

We pray for a Spirit-given unity in the church around the Holy Scriptures of God. To that end I hope that future meetings of the Council might see fraternal airings—without formal resolutions—of the admittedly divergent views that distress us all. If that becomes a reality, then perhaps the proliferation of newspaper articles and of communications such as this pastoral letter might become unnecessary. The By-Laws of Synod outline very limited duties for the Council.

We live in tension. So be it! May our God and Father in heaven forgive us all for whatever we have contributed to those tensions that mute our witness to His grace and mercy in the Christ of Calvary. And may that Savior, whose blood cleanses us from all sins, grant you and your people a blessed Lent beneath the Cross.

The Rev. Karl L. Barth, President  
The South Wisconsin District  
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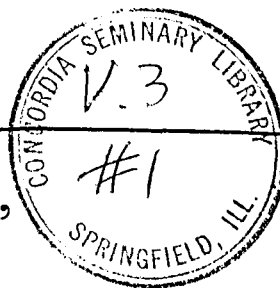
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"I believed,  
and therefore have  
I spoken"  
2 Cor. 4:13



## 'Details'

THE reader of *Affirm* or any other journal dealing with Missouri's troubles these days will know that the two overriding theological issues facing Synod are 1) the use of the Historical-Critical Method, and 2) Gospel Reductionism, or as some have termed it Gospel Fundamentalism or just Gospelism. The discerning reader will also understand that these two issues are closely related. For the Historical-Critical Method which has been plaguing the Christian church for the past two centuries always calls for some kind of reductionism. When one has rejected or mitigated the *sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone) principle of the Reformation and begun to strip away what he as historian feels are unnecessary accretions, unauthentic stories, mere legends and other unimportant or untrue elements from Scripture, one *must* reduce one's version of the Christian faith or of the Gospel to certain basic principles or truths which one thinks are still tenable and important.

This is precisely what the nineteenth century Classical Liberal theologian, Adolf von Harnack, did when on the basis of the historical-critical study of the New Testament he reduced Christianity to the principles of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. This is what Rudolf Bultmann has done in our day when on the basis of his historical-critical analysis of the New Testament he sets up a program to demythologize the New Testament and then interpret it existentially in the light of man's self-understanding. This is what Paul Tillich has done in our day: judging that modern man's historical sense makes it impossible for him to believe the myths (the miracles and doctrines) of Scripture, Tillich reduces Christianity to man's ultimate concern for the "ground of being," "Being itself," etc. In every case the Historical-Critical Method was applied to Scripture consistently, according to modern man's understanding of history and the principles and purposes of historical research. And in every case the use of this method led to a radical reductionism.

THIS is inevitable if the critic wishes to retain some semblance or remnant of historic Christianity. He must strip, skim off what can no longer be believed, whether it be the doctrine or the history proclaimed in Scripture, and thus make Christianity somehow believable. And it seems so proper, so honest to discard what is judged to be peripheral and unnecessary anyway. And it seems so helpful, so almost virtuous, to reduce Christianity for modern man, beset by problems of unbelief, to what is essential, to remove for modern man the accretions, the incrustations to the core message of Scripture. Like washing mud off a wheel.

Has the faculty at St. Louis in its late drive to impose the Historical-Critical Method upon Synod avoided this inevitable drift toward reductionism? Not at all. Nor do its members want to. Consciously and with much labor and

care the proponents of the method in Synod work out their peculiar form of reductionism, a "Gospel" reductionism this time, which they hope will be acceptable to our synod because it has a certain Lutheran evangelical ring to it. And so, like their forerunners in the historical-critical enterprise, they set for themselves the task of rehabilitating or protecting the Gospel. This in a church ravaged, they might say, by "biblicists," "fundamentalists," "literalists" and "legalists" who tend to deny the Gospel and its power to free by insisting that everything in Scripture ought to be believed because Scripture says so.

How does this brand of reductionism work? Let us examine the recent St. Louis faculty statement, *Faithful to our Calling Faithful to our Lord*, as a case study of such reductionism. First of all, the Gospel is said to be the center of the Scriptures, the heart of our theology and the core of our lives. Most commendable! But then on the basis of this self-acknowledged adherence to the Gospel the statement proceeds to cast aspersions on the theology of those who would dwell on the "authenticity of isolated miraculous details" recorded in Scripture and demand an acceptance of these details, who would focus our attention on the "historical factuality" and the "historical details" recorded in Scripture. The clear implications of such criticism is that those who have such concerns over maintaining the "historical accuracy" of the Gospel narratives and over the "historicity of every detail of the life of Jesus as recorded by the evangelists"—and how can a detail in the life of Jesus not be historical?—are somehow missing our "primary need for Christ" and are "leading us away from Christ rather than to him." Such people are unevangelical is the faculty implication. The faculty statement attempts in effect to brand those who insist upon the inerrancy of Scripture as unLutheran and unevangelical.

NOW since there is, to my knowledge, no one in Synod who by pressing for the authenticity of the details recorded in Scripture thereby denies the Gospel of Christ or "destroys the Promise," we may conclude that such warnings in the faculty statement are polemical bombast calculated to soften up the reader to accept the Gospel Reductionism offered. And the Gospel Reductionism functions about like this: the Gospel is used to determine what are details in Scripture and what are not, but also to determine what details in Scripture are important to the Gospel and what details are unimportant, unnecessary and therefore dispensable.

To me there are insurmountable problems connected with such a program. I am sure that there is general agreement in Synod that the Gospel is the chief article of Scripture, as our Confessions say (*Smalcald Articles II, II 1f.*), that there are many things asserted in Scripture less important

(Continued on Page 2)

## Details . . . (Continued from Page 1)

than the Gospel and that one ought to relate all the articles of faith to the Gospel and not make too much of details recorded in Scripture.

But now what is a detail? And how does one use the Gospel to determine details in Scripture? What is the function of details in Scripture and how do they relate to the Gospel, if at all? Are the details in Scripture really unimportant or unnecessary or dispensable? If so, why has the Holy Spirit allowed them to enter Scripture in such vast numbers? If not, are there any actual details in Scripture at all? Do all details pertain somehow to the Gospel and does the Gospel therefore entail them all? If so, can we dispense with the details in Scripture or make them open questions and still remain faithful to the Gospel? Does the Gospel give us the right somehow to dispense with what it entails? These are just some of the questions—and they could be multiplied—which beset the Gospel Reductionist. The questions serve to show how arbitrary, unthought out, and impossible his program really is.

But perhaps such a third degree tactic is unfair. We should first let the Gospel Reductionist show us how his program enables him to set forth the unconditioned Gospel in all its purity.

**A**LL right. In its statement, *Faithful to our Calling Faithful to our Lord*, the St. Louis faculty offers one excellent example (p. 16) of Gospel Reductionism as it interprets the history of Adam and Eve and the Fall recorded in Gen. 3. The interpretation is that it does not matter whether Adam and Eve existed at all or whether the Fall ever happened in history as Genesis 3 relates it. These elements of the text are embellishments, anthropomorphic "symbolism" and "theological reflection," integral to the text, but not to be pressed according to the "yardstick of modern historians,"—in other words, details, having no factual content at all, but participating only in the overall functional purpose of the entire text to teach us in the church today that "our sinfulness is our own fault." That's all, all that is required by the norm of Gospel Reductionism.

It is significant that on the basis of this interpretation the faculty statement is unable to affirm—or at least omits affirming—the Lutheran doctrine of original sin according to two of its most fundamental aspects: 1) that the guilt of Adam's sin was imputed, or reckoned, to all men, and 2) that all men actually inherit sin from Adam through their parents by propagation. And this reticence to state the Lutheran position is understandable; if the "details" concerning Adam and Eve and their Fall do not refer to historical facts; and if, since they are only "details," we may interpret them in a variety of ways!

So we see how a false interpretation of what are said to be details in Scripture, or a discounting of these details, can affect our doctrine of sin, our preaching of Law, and ultimately our proclamation of the Gospel. Ironical, isn't it, since the Gospel was used in the first place allegedly to determine and interpret the details!

**A** fundamental error, I think, behind the entire enterprise of Gospel Reductionism is the failure to understand what a detail in Scripture really is. A detail, according to definition, is a small or subordinate particular which supports something else—like the details in a speech, in a history, in a piece of needlework, or painting or mosaic. A detail there-

fore is not unimportant or dispensable. Take away the details of a history—or of a piece of needlework or of a portrait or an architectural model, for that matter—and you may alter the very history, or you may render it suspect, or perhaps, like peeling an onion, you wind up with no history at all. When Julius Caesar in his *Gallie Wars* tells of his military accomplishments and offers a detailed description of how he built a bridge across the Rhine River, such a description is indeed a detail in his history; but it *supports*, it offers factual evidence for, what he is telling us about his campaigns. And even though it is a detail, it is essential for his telling the history. So it is with Moses as he tells us the details of how Noah built the Ark, with the authors of Kings and Chronicles as they detail their history, with the evangelists as they provide so many details concerning the ministry of our Lord.

The Bible is a long book with thousands of details; and every detail serves that central purpose of Scripture, that we and all men might know Christ as our Savior. This is what Paul is driving at when he says that every Scripture is useful for doctrine (II Tim. 3:16) and when he maintains that whatsoever was written in the Scriptures was for our instruction that we might have hope through the patience and encouragement of Scripture (Rom. 15:4).

If all this is so, then the results of Gospel Reductionism stand condemned. For every detail in Scripture impinges in some way upon the Gospel or is entailed by it. And we who believe the Gospel and are committed to preach it and the whole counsel of God will not discount details in that very Book of books which is the only norm of the Gospel itself. We will not make the interpretation of details open questions. We will not pooch-pooch or criticize those who are concerned to maintain the "historical factuality" and even the "historical details" of what is recounted as history in Scripture. But we will trust the divine Word of Scripture also in its "every detail." We will seek to understand and interpret every detail of Scripture as it relates to the Gospel. And we will abandon the enterprise of Gospel Reductionism which, yielding to the pressures and demands of historical criticism, reduces not chaff from the kernel in Scriptures, but reduces the perimeters of the Gospel itself.

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## Affirm

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## An Open Letter: Part II

*This is the second of Dr. Scharlemann's open letters printed by AFFIRM. Enough evidence for the statements Dr. Scharlemann makes has been examined and enough witnesses have been interviewed to warrant, in AFFIRM'S opinion, a synodical examination of the Seminary procedures he refers to. It is with the hope that the publication of these letters will lead to a God-pleasing resolution of these matters that AFFIRM prints them.*

DEAR Jim:

Well, you at least show me the honor of a reply! A good many other people have written to me during the past few years wondering whether I had changed my theological position. When I answer in the negative and try to make the point of the incredible corruption prevailing at the Seminary, they somehow quit writing. I really believe they find the story quite unbelievable. And yet it is true. You were thoughtful enough to respond to my letter and express your shocked disbelief. I can well understand that. It is hard to imagine a great and honorable institution like our alma mater so thoroughly debauched in so short a time. And I didn't even begin to tell you some of the most incredible episodes. So let me describe two of them for you. The first one I'll mention is a meeting in September 1971. It was a joint affair between the exegetical and the systematic departments. Prof. Wegner had been appointed by the President, before the meeting started, to serve as secretary. He gave a little speech about the fact that a secretary doesn't always get down everything. This sounded like a very strange way of talk, because there wasn't anyone in the room who didn't know that. Later on it became clear why the speech had been made; for the minutes prepared later, by Prof. Wegner, omitted a number of crucial items, which would have put an entirely different touch to the report of the occasion. I immediately sat down and wrote a memo to every member of the faculty calling attention to this strange kind of reporting, which, in effect, distorted completely what went on at the session.

Now, I'm sure that any group or organization you ever belonged to would immediately see to the correction of the minutes. But not the faculty! To this day, the report has not been corrected. I might add that this matter was brought to the attention of the Board of Control. As far as I know, its members have not even discussed it! That is the kind of interest they have shown in items that exhibit the ethical corruption which pervades the whole institution by now.

BUT let me take you one step farther back in time. As you may recall, I asked President Preus at the beginning of April 1970 to take into account that some strange kind of teaching was going on at the Seminary. I did this by way of letter when, after some months of trying to get things straightened up from the inside, I was persuaded that this was a waste of time. (I can fill you in on those details later). A carbon of this letter and a covering letter of my own went to the President of the Seminary.

By way of response, the President of the Seminary, whom the Handbook designates as "spiritual head" of the Seminary community, called me into his office and talked in a fashion that bordered on the obscene and threatened to "expose me" and to destroy my reputation with faculty colleagues. I said very little.

The following Tuesday a regular faculty meeting was held. One of my colleagues asked what the agenda was for a special meeting that had been called for Thursday afternoon of that week. Dr. Repp's reply was that it was "the President's agenda," and that no further information would be given.

I had a hunch what was up. I waited to be told by the President or Dr. Repp what the agenda would be, if my letter were the subject. This was of some crucial import since I had a duty to perform with the AFROTC at Capital University, Columbus, Ohio, on April 16, that very Thursday. I was rehearsing what I would have to do to get myself out of that job in case I was notified what the special meeting was all about. I was not informed. So I thought that my hunch had been wrong.

I left a written excuse in the manner that I had always done, except for the additional precaution of asking the telephone operator to whom I gave it for inclusion in Dr. Repp's materials—of asking him please to remember that I had given him this item! He promised to do so. When I asked him to make real sure that this note got into Dr. Repp's box, he promised very faithfully to do so. And he did!

SO I was off campus at the time of the special meeting of the faculty, since no indication had been given as to what the meeting was about. That must have been some faculty meeting! It was, in fact, a kangaroo court. The courtesy copy of my letter to President Preus was read—mind you, without my having been asked or Dr. Preus! My covering letter was, conveniently, not read. The President completely misrepresented my whole enterprise. So well prepared was all this, that a long sheet of abusive statements was distributed to each member of the faculty. Four men stood up straight in that meeting. (They, with myself, later became "the five".) They criticized this extraordinary procedure; and they voted in the negative when the President asked for a vote of confidence in his competence.

This last matter, by the way, is of extreme importance. For, you see, from that day forward members of the faculty were no longer free to act with integrity. They had voted away their freedom of action, having been thoroughly compromised. But that's really another story, of which, possibly, more later.

When I got back from Columbus, Ohio, I heard what had happened. So I promptly wrote to the President of the Seminary to ask that I represent myself in the meeting of the Board at which he threatened to bring up this matter. This permission was categorically denied!

Again, you would think that, when such a matter was brought to the attention of the Board, it would take immediate action for such capricious attempts at depriving a person of his right to defend himself. The Board has had this information for all these many months. As far as I know, it has done nothing at all.

The four colleagues who stood up for what was right in the meeting of April 16, 1970, know all the gruesome details of that kangaroo court. They took extensive notes; and you might want to check with one of them sometime what went on. I have not included some of the most unbelievable items, mostly because I was not present. This was all done in my absence!

Now, that kind of thing is hard to believe. But it is as true as I sit here and type this letter. As you reflect on it,

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## An Open Letter: Part II

*This is the second of Dr. Scharlemann's open letters printed by AFFIRM. Enough evidence for the statements Dr. Scharlemann makes has been examined and enough witnesses have been interviewed to warrant, in AFFIRM'S opinion, a synodical examination of the Seminary procedures he refers to. It is with the hope that the publication of these letters will lead to a God-pleasing resolution of these matters that AFFIRM prints them.*

DEAR Jim:

Well, you at least show me the honor of a reply! A good many other people have written to me during the past few years wondering whether I had changed my theological position. When I answer in the negative and try to make the point of the incredible corruption prevailing at the Seminary, they somehow quit writing.

I really believe they find the story quite unbelievable. And it is! Yet it is true. You were thoughtful enough to respond to express your shocked disbelief. I can well understand that. It is hard to imagine a great and honorable institution like our alma mater so thoroughly debauched in so short a time.

And I didn't even begin to tell you some of the most incredible episodes. So let me describe two of them for you.

The first one I'll mention is a meeting in September 1971. It was a joint affair between the exegetical and the systematic departments. Prof. Wegner had been appointed by the President, before the meeting started, to serve as secretary. He gave a little speech about the fact that a secretary doesn't always get down everything. This sounded like a very strange bit of talk, because there wasn't anyone in the room who didn't know that. Later on it became clear why the speech had been made; for the minutes prepared later, by Prof. Wegner, omitted a number of crucial items, which would have put an entirely different touch to the report of the occasion. I immediately sat down and wrote a memo to every member of the faculty calling attention to this strange kind of reporting, which, in effect, distorted completely what went on at the session.

Now, I'm sure that any group or organization you ever belonged to would immediately see to the correction of the minutes. But not the faculty! To this day, the report has not been corrected. I might add that this matter was brought to the attention of the Board of Control. As far as I know, its members have not even discussed it! That is the kind of interest they have shown in items that exhibit the ethical corruption which pervades the whole institution by now.

BUT let me take you one step farther back in time. As you may recall, I asked President Preus at the beginning of April 1970 to take into account that some strange kind of teaching was going on at the Seminary. I did this by way of letter when, after some months of trying to get things straightened up from the inside, I was persuaded that this was a waste of time. (I can fill you in on those details later). A carbon of this letter and a covering letter of my own went to the President of the Seminary.

By way of response, the President of the Seminary, whom the Handbook designates as "spiritual head" of the Seminary community, called me into his office and talked in a fashion that bordered on the obscene and threatened to "expose me" and to destroy my reputation with faculty colleagues. I said very little.

The following Tuesday a regular faculty meeting. One of my colleagues asked what the agenda of that week. Dr. Repp's reply was that it was "no agenda," and that no further information given.

I had a hunch what was up. I waited to be told by the President or Dr. Repp what the agenda would be, if they were the subject. This was of some crucial importance. I had a duty to perform with the AFROTC at Capital City, Columbus, Ohio, on April 16, that very Thursday. I was rehearsing what I would have to do to get myself ready for that job in case I was notified what the special meeting was all about. I was not informed. So I thought that I had been wrong.

I left a written excuse in the manner that I had done, except for the additional precaution of asking the phone operator to whom I gave it for inclusion in Dr. Preus's materials—of asking him please to remember that I had given him this item! He promised to do so. When I asked him to make real sure that this note got into Dr. Repp's hands, he promised very faithfully to do so. And he did!

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(Continued on Page 9)



## The Bottle Game

HOW can a theologian who says he believes that the Bible is the inspired word of God turn right around and tell us that this same Bible is also an ordinary history book, full of myths, errors, and prejudices? The answer lies in the definitions given to the words used—and therein lies the source of many of our perplexities and frustrations.

Words are like labels on bottles. In real life, with real bottles, we learn what is inside through experience. For instance, the label beer brings to mind a liquid with a certain color, taste, and odor. The same can be said of coke, orange juice, wine, etc. And as long as the company is honest, the contents are the same. That is why we do not bother to open each coke bottle and taste it prior to purchase. Occasionally a friend may put water in a beer bottle and carefully recap it, and then laugh at our surprise, but this is not a normal course of events.

Words are like those labels, and the contents of the bottles are the meanings we give to the words. We are often of the impression that everyone has the same content in their personal word bottles, but this is seldom true. As an example, take the word "love." If I were to ask each of you to write a definition, I am sure that most of them would be different. A dictionary is an attempt to insure that the contents of the bottles are uniform, but none of us know the definition for each specific word.

THEOLOGY also has a set of bottles, a set of theological terms such as inspiration, inerrancy, God's Word, Bible, and Gospel, all of which must have content. How are these 'filled'?

In our Lutheran church body the contents were drawn from a 'vat' called Holy Scripture. The confessions do this for many of the 'bottles,' particularly those that were in question at the time. Fifty years ago you could have gone into the study of almost every pastor or professor within Synod and discovered on each 'bottle shelf' an identical set of 'bottles' with identical contents. Men could talk with one another and recognize what they were saying. Because of this, there was an openness, a honesty, a trust, and a camaraderie among them. There was no need to open 'bottles' and check contents. Everyone was drawing the contents from the same 'vat', namely Holy Scripture. To ask for the privilege of sampling the contents of their 'bottle' would have been viewed as an insult to their integrity—and rightly so. That is our heritage. This was the training that pastors of that era received. Their 'bottles' were filled under the careful tutelage of classroom professors, men who led them to the Scripture 'vat' time and again.

Then it happened. In a post World War II effort to achieve academic excellence, men were sent from the Seminary to east coast and German universities to obtain advanced degrees. There they studied under professors who had been tampering with the contents of the bottles, professors who led them to another vat, one called 'human reason' or 'philosophy.' The pitch went something like this: "Your bottles are filled with old stuff. It is flat and stale and has lost all of its appeal. Allow me to let you sample this new 'liquid' from the 'reason' vat. This has sparkle, a zest, and a tingle that is exciting. Why don't you pour some of the old contents out of your bottles and add this new 'liquid'? Then you will have a mixture that modern man will be eager to accept."

MOST of the men succumbed to the temptation. As a result, they returned to the Seminary with the same set of bottles, but with contents diluted and contaminated with the new 'liquid' from the reason 'vat'. However, seldom was this recognized, because the bottles were still labeled the same, and the change in content could not be detected from the outside. A few fellow profs were given a sample—and some found it exciting and added it to their bottles. More important though, students, whose bottles were essentially empty, came to the classroom and there were given diluted contents with which to fill their bottles. In addition, they were also led to the reason 'vat'. There many of them, being young, impressionable, and eager for excitement, added more of the new 'liquid' to that which was already contaminated. Some of these then went on to obtain advanced degrees at universities where further dilution took place, after which they returned to teach at the Seminary. So it goes, until finally you reach the point where the major portion of the contents of the bottles of the professors and students are being obtained from the reason 'vat'.

The problem is that this had largely gone undetected. You as pastors and lay people were trained to trust the content. If you did question the teachings of a professor you were led into his study and shown his set of bottles. "See," you were told, "he has the complete set of Lutheran bottles." But the bottles were never opened, because we felt that this demonstrated a lack of trust.

The same was true in other areas. We negotiated a fellowship agreement with the ALC by each bringing out our set of bottles and comparing labels. When we found the labels were identical, we stated that we were in full accord in theological issues. The CTCR repeatedly asked that the contents be examined, but it never happened. Now that the lids are coming off, we are finding vast differences in the contents, and as a result discord rather than accord or harmony.

WE also prepared synodical statements dealing with theological matters which in reality were cases of empty bottles. All the right labels were there, but being empty they could be filled with whatever content the user desired. How else could we reach unanimous decisions when we held divergent theological views?

Few men had the courage to request that the bottles be opened and sampled. This, I believe, was the great 'sin' of Herman Otten. You may not agree with his method, but wasn't he really telling us that he had encountered some contaminated 'liquid', and that there were bottles that should be opened?

Is this not also the great 'crime' of Dr. J. A. O. Preus? He sent a team of men into the Seminary to open bottles and divulge contents. Wasn't this the purpose of the investigation? No man was questioned regarding his personal faith. Rather, he was asked to divulge the contents of his bottles. What is so wrong with that? Nothing, unless we have been trying to hide the contents.

The Statement of Scriptural Principle is an attempt to help us identify the contents that were found. Drawing from the Scripture 'vat', the labeled bottles are filled with content.

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# An Analysis of Missouri

A number of Missouri's congregations and clergy saw its last convention at Milwaukee as Missouri's decisive gathering. When it did not act, to their minds, as firmly and fully as they thought it should have, a small number of these parishes and pastors left Missouri to form the Federation for Authentic Lutheranism.

Most of us who call ourselves conservatives didn't join their exodus; we disagreed with their evaluation of events in Missouri. A year and a half later one of the clergy members of FAL, the Reverend Eugene P. Kauffeld, made an appraisal of Missouri's present condition; a few of his paragraphs are excerpted with minimal comments on this page. Frankly, *Affirm's* Editorial Group felt that Pastor Kauffeld's assessments were less hopeful than the Group's own analysis of the possibilities for the synod's future. History will judge who was closer to the truth in this difficult area.

But *Affirm* did feel that many of the Kauffeld comments did well serve the conservative cause by highlighting, from another viewpoint, the various aspects of the struggle within Missouri in a fresh manner and with a forthrightness often not found in printed materials.

*Affirm* doesn't necessarily agree with each of the following analyses, but it does offer you this sampling of his thought in the belief that it may help you clarify your own.

Of the last convention and the issues it left for New Orleans, he writes,

- 1). LCUSA is more firmly entrenched than ever. The presidency of LCUSA is in the hands of Missouri in the person of Dr. Hoffman (at the time this was written—ed.) who was appointed by the Missouri Administration. Will New Orleans reverse this?
- 2). Missouri has an established Fellowship with the ALC and a mounting demand to declare Fellowship with the LCA. Denver passed the ALC Fellowship with about 80 votes. Milwaukee reaffirmed it by almost a 9-1 ratio. Will New Orleans reverse it, when almost nothing has been said or done since Milwaukee to instruct and lead the people of Missouri?
- 3). Woman Ordination can be advocated openly in Missouri without discipline. Pressure is being applied within and without to bring in Woman Ordination. The Liberals in Missouri are speaking for it. The ALC has declared that it will continue ordination of women. Missouri is in fellowship with it. In reality, their women pastors could preach in Missouri pulpits or accept a call into Missouri. Will New Orleans reverse this?
- 4). Doctrinally the Missouri Synod has in reality set everyone free. Each person in Missouri is to give a doctrinal resolution "no more status than it deserves." The president of Synod and his administration as a result are actually only figure heads. No real authority is left to them anymore. The only power they possess is the power of speech. The real power resides in the Executive Secretaries, the Boards, Seminaries and Colleges. Will New Orleans reverse this?
- 5). Mission Life has replaced the old Sunday School materials. Its corrections and revisions have been virtually a defense of the bejeweled heresy and unbiblical material used in it. Hardly anything is said in criticism anymore. Will New Orleans reverse this?

- 6). "A Call to Openness and Trust" is no longer an issue. Its advocates walk free and tall. However, the bitter fruit that this issue bore is now being tasted by the conservatives. An attempt is being made to show the danger of the use of the Higher Critical Theory at the Seminary in any teaching. This is good, but the theory is taught in almost all the institutions. It has been taught for years now. A great number of pastors and teachers believe that if it is used with care it is fine. This is one of the basic reasons of liberalism in Missouri. This theory has produced the same fruit in Missouri it has produced in Europe and any Church that employed it or allowed it. The attempt to reveal the danger though necessary, is too little, too late. The cancer and its result is now spread throughout the Missouri Synod. Will New Orleans reverse this?

IN view of his analysis Pastor Kauffeld urges on Missourians a course of action which includes taking steps preparatory to leaving Missouri, should New Orleans leave the situation in Missouri fundamentally unchanged.

*Affirm*, however, urges Missourians to face New Orleans in a spirit of dedication and hope and confidence and to make a calm judgment about any post-New Orleans action only after the results are in. But it also strongly urges a careful consideration of several of the points the pastor makes about the conservative position,

The Conservatives need to disillusion themselves as to the overwhelming conservative majority of laymen, pastors and teachers in the Missouri Synod. This is a myth. There are many left, but the majority of the laymen are completely uninformed and many care less! . . .

The conservative pastors, teachers and laymen need to awake from their simplistic dream that as long as they are conservative in their local congregations, the liberal movement cannot and will not affect them. This type of thinking is as realistic as a stone dropped in water saying it will not get wet or sink. An ancient proverb says the actual result of such thinking very plainly, "Show me with whom thou goest and I will tell thee who thou art." . . .

Last but not least, the pastors, teachers and laymen of Missouri should pray as they have never done before. They should study the Bible and its doctrines as they have never done before. They should then meet the issues at New Orleans decisively and theologically in prayer and the Word setting aside the foolishness of political maneuvering.

Pastor Kauffeld undoubtedly touches on important essentials in these excerpts from his material, *Milwaukee to Where: Part II*, the manuscript from which these paragraphs have been taken.

The New Orleans reports will show how much progress has been made the last two years in restoring a conservative stance in Missouri. New Orleans can by God's grace carry Missouri still further toward a doctrinal position which will please God.

All of us on the *Affirm* staff hope and pray for this.

# The Historical-Critical Method and the Ten Commandments

**G**OD gave to man not only the one commandment recorded in Gen. 2:17 "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it," but having created man in His image, God inscribed the knowledge of His will, the moral Law, in man's heart (Col. 3:10). This is also the understanding of the Lutheran Confessions, where we read: "Even our first parents before the fall did not live without Law, who had the Law of God written in their hearts, because they were created in the image of God" (Gen. 1:26f; 2:16 ff.; 3:3). As a result of the fall into sin, man's mind has become darkened and the knowledge of the moral Law became obscured, but its knowledge was not totally effaced.

Whether or not the natural Law written in man's heart was amplified by any revealed Law between the time of Adam and Moses, no one knows. But the Scriptures relate that at Mt. Sinai this Law was amplified by God Himself. The Ten Commandments or Decalogue or Ten Words were vocally proclaimed in the presence of the Israelites that had left Egypt. Yahweh Himself wrote the Ten Commandments on two tables of stone, which were given to Moses and which in anger he broke, when he saw his nation worshipping the golden calf. The Decalogue was written a second time by God on two stone tablets which eventually were placed in the ark of the covenant of the holy of holies in the tabernacle. While the original autographic version of the Ten Words no longer exists, God caused Moses to record them in two different places in his writings, namely, in Exodus 20:1-17 and in Deuteronomy 5:6-21.

The original Decalogue contains some statements that pertained only to the Jews of the Old Dispensation, such as the Sabbath commandment and the prohibition to make no visual representation of God (cf. Exod. 20:2,9,11, 12). The New Testament gives an exposition of the Decalogue in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. chs. 5,6,7), and Romans 13:9. For a true understanding of the Third Commandment Mark 2:27,28 and Col. 2:16 should be consulted; for the correct understanding of the Fourth Commandment Eph. 6:2, 3.

Historic Christianity has always regarded the moral Law as having its origin with God, the Creator and Judge of all mankind. The moral Law is binding upon all men, at all times and is in force till Judgment day. The proponents of the Historical-Critical Method undermine the teachings of the Ten Commandments by their methodology.

**H**OW have the practitioners of the Historical-Critical Method undermined the two accounts in the Pentateuch? One modern critical scholar, John L. McKenzie wrote in his *Dictionary of the Bible*: "Many older biblical critics denied that the decalogue went back to Mosaic times. They regarded it as a summary of the ethical teaching of the prophets of the 8th-7th centuries" (p. 187). This was the position of the Lutheran scholar Mowinckel, who in his book dealing the with the Decalogue, claimed that the Ten Commandments had their origin in the life situation of the eighth century prophets, arguing that the ethical demands of the Decalogue would better fit conditions in the 8th and succeeding centuries B.C. However, an impartial reading

of the prophetic books gives the definite impression that the requirements of the Decalogue are presupposed by the prophets who evaluate and criticize the actions of their times by the ethical and cultic demands set forth in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The prophets were not the *creators* of the Ten Commandments.

Earlier critics like Wellhausen and those following him believed that the type of thought reflected in the Ten Commandments did not fit the wilderness stay of Israel but rather the time after the settlement in Canaan. It was claimed that the reference to house and field, ox and ass could not refer to the wilderness wanderings. Again, the prohibition against image making, it is asserted could not have been given by God as a directive that would serve as a warning of the type of danger that would confront Israel in Palestine after the conquest. However, most critical scholars have abandoned these earlier views because archaeology has shown that the prohibitions against image making and the observance of the Sabbath would not have been out of character for Mosaic times.

**T**HE older critical stance amounts to a flat rejection of the clear assertions of Holy Scripture, which affirms that God spake the Ten Commandments in the presence of Moses and the camp of Israel at Mt. Sinai. Furthermore, the critical position denies the Biblical text that God wrote the commandments on two stone tablets and that Moses was the mediator of the moral Law, this fact also is the teaching of the New Testament (cf. John 1:17). McKenzie concedes that the Decalogue goes back to Mosaic times but asserts: "The attribution of the Decalogue to the Mosaic period does not imply its attribution to Moses himself, although he is the most likely candidate" (p. 187). But according to the Biblical text there is no doubt who gave the Ten Commandments and who received them: Moses was given the Decalogue and later was motivated to record it twice in his writings so that future generations would have the Ten Commandments in permanent form for purposes of consultation, guidance, study and memorization.

Still other advocates of the Historical-Critical Method distinguish between two different kinds of Decalogue, the one they call "the ethical Decalogue" (Exod. 20:1-17) and the other "the ritual Decalogue" (Exod. 34: 14-26). The so-called "ethical Decalogue" is supposedly found in the E-source (a document supposedly written in the northern kingdom about 850 or 750 B.C.) and "the ritual Decalogue" is assigned to another source, the J-source (allegedly penned about 950 or 850 B.C. in the southern kingdom). Thus the so-called "ritual Decalogue" is earlier in origin by a century than the "ethical Decalogue," which contains the Ten Commandments. This therefore rejects the historical reporting and chronology of Exodus which does not place the events of Exodus 20 after chapter 34, but the reverse is the Biblical order; the laws in both chapters were given within two months of each other. There is only one definitive moral Law given Israel and the two chapters from Exodus are wrongly pitted against each other.

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# Polarization

**L**IBERALS and tepid "neutrals" in Synod are quick to hurl this word like a stone at every faithful and orthodox Lutheran who asks that all members of Synod confess what Synod has affirmed since its beginnings. Some have used it like a magic term in meetings to suppress all testimony against the lie now seeking equal standing with the truth in Synod. Officials call faithful pastors and laymen, who will not sell out their confessional birthright for a mess of pottage, "trouble makers."

## What Is "Polarization" About?

**O**N the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:40) Peter told the believers: "Be saved from this crooked generation." The enemies of the Gospel certainly judged such sentiments highly "polarizing." Peter was put into prison. But Peter had been imitating the extremely "polarizing" activities of his Lord and Master. Polarization was a major charge of the Jewish leaders against Jesus Christ when Pilate judged Him.

Recall the doctrinal peace in the Missouri Synod of a generation ago. No one spoke of polarization. To be alert against the possibility of false doctrine was everywhere believed to be a normal obligation of all members of Synod. The constitution of Synod (*Handbook*, p. 15) states that it is the purpose of Synod to conserve and to promote the unity of the true faith, "and a united defense against schism and sectarianism."

It is schismatic to distort or to negate articles of faith which Synod has explicitly confessed in the past by specific doctrinal resolutions. Synod in convention passes doctrinal resolutions for the truth it holds dear and against schismatic or heretical doctrinal opinions. When Synod does that in its conventions, it fulfills its constitutional obligations. That's what Synod is for.

## Theological Issues Causing Polarization

**F**OR years, liberals have denied the very existence of such issues. Even when St. Louis faculty members made explicit charges of false doctrine and malfeasance against other members of the faculty, the Board of Control refused by one vote to acknowledge the existence of such charges. The synodical media never allowed full descriptions of the mess to be given to our pastors, teachers, and lay people. The faithful in our far-flung fields of service were often puzzled, bewildered, and sometimes deeply hurt by the doctrinal convolutions rolling toward them in tidal waves.

Detailed explanations of doctrinal issues in Synod would require many theological essays. The minority of five at the St. Louis Seminary have given the Board of Control a massive amount of data on the subject. There should be no question at all in Synod of what to do about our seminaries if that evidence ever were to see the light of day. But we shall mention only one issue here: What is Holy Scripture, and how is it to be interpreted.

If this question is answered within the ideational context of historical criticism, then it follows that other doctrinal issues are at stake. For example, to grant the validity of historical criticism as a method of Biblical interpretation means that our interest moves from the proclamation of God's saving work in Jesus Christ to the social gospel and its manifold proposals for "social salvation"—which is also

the title of a book published by Prof. John C. Bennett in the 1940's.

It is a basic presupposition of this criticism that the Biblical documents have their origin in human religious experience, and are therefore not given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For such a purpose, the history of Christian teaching becomes convenient source material for propaganda in the interest of socio-political programs. "Mission to the whole man" is the attractive theological mask worn by those who plan to lead Synod to reduce its divine call according to Matt. 28: 19,20 to become a mere instrument for social action. In such a context, salvation means political "liberation" and the social justice of the revolutionary.

## Other Interests, Other Plans

**I**T is a massive shifting of the agenda "to accommodate" the Lutheran confessional corpus to the known demands of an ecumenical and nihilistic spirit of the times. If completed, the maneuver will result in the destruction of the doctrinal heritage of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Why? Because this "horizontalization" of the Lutheran witness will turn Synod into a social convenience and neutralize the spiritual force of the given task of preaching the Word of God. Our confessions will become mere museum relics, as they already have become for many Lutheran professors and pastors, and the Scriptures will be the plaything of theologians doing their own historical-critical thing.

That members of our synod would be affected by the galloping moral disintegration of our society was to be expected. But unexpected is the participation in this process by some pastors, district presidents, and professors. Their attitudes of irresponsibility to the doctrinal or confessional heritage of our synod is shown at the very time when their interventions for good are most needed.

## Peace and Certainty—I Thess. 5:3

**Y**ES, members of the LC-MS had grown accustomed to them, as though peace and certainty had become our inalienable birthright. The schismatics unhesitatingly encouraged and promoted an atmosphere of synodical security. Pretty titles, like "Openness and Trust," were given to efforts which would utterly destroy doctrinal and confessional discipline and subvert Christian freedom into an irresponsible doctrinal libertinism.

Schismatics within Synod offer it an agenda of a form of godliness without the power thereof (II Tim. 3:5)—a ritualistic courtesy toward the Word of God and its interpretation by our Lutheran Confessions, but without the attendant discipline as followers of our Lord.

Unless we return to the "true source and fountain of Israel," our Church may retain its present form and structure for a few years longer, but it will resemble a dried autumn leaf, moving without direction, blown by the secular spirit of our times.

## Why Polarization?

**B**ECAUSE it is our duty as faithful and loving disciples of our Lord. He polarized His contemporaries by demanding that they stand in witness for or against the truth. Neutralists ("tepid" or "leaning") had no place in His kingdom. He

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# Thoughts Prompted by 'A Study of Generations'

**E**VEN though the weekly American oracle, *Time* magazine, last summer said that *A Study of Generations* (hereafter referred to as *A Study*) was "assured of becoming a classic," one finds the monograph extremely weak in theoretical discussion and interpretation. Time and again this writer was disappointed in merely finding data reported in a raw empirical fashion.

Methodologically, *As Study* has been hailed as outstanding. For the most part this is true. Yet there are poorly formulated questions, for instance, those which seek to tap the respondents' understanding and acceptance of Christ's two natures. However, since the objective of this essay is to discuss the implications of those findings that are based on clear, well-formulated questions, there is no need to give further evaluation of *A Study's* strengths or weaknesses.

## Some Selected Findings

**O**F the 4,745 individuals between 15 and 65 years of age, representatively selected from a population of six million Lutherans (ALC, LCS, LC-MS), 95 per cent say God is a loving heavenly Father; 86 per cent accept Christ as Savior; 84 per cent say salvation releases one from sin and frees for new life, and 81 per cent accept the physical resurrection of Christ.

These data may tell some in our midst that the preaching and teaching in the Lutheran Church is quite effective. But can anyone, who takes the Gospel message seriously, really come to this conclusion? That only eight out of ten members accept Christ's physical resurrection can hardly be reason for a feeling of satisfaction. Moreover, there are a number of other unfortunate findings.

Three out of four Lutherans say that "belief in Jesus Christ as Savior (i)s absolutely necessary for salvation," but on the other hand (now brace yourself), only 13 per cent believe that "being completely ignorant of Jesus . . . will definitely prevent salvation." Simple logic prompts the question: how can so many Lutherans hold such contradictory beliefs? This question is especially pertinent when one observes that one-third of the respondents, according to the authors, "have been to college," a figure higher than the national average.

Man is saved by grace alone, not by works. Ever since the Reformation this doctrine has been one of the hallmarks of Lutheranism. Yet this message has either not come through or it has been ignored, for 50 per cent of America's six million Lutherans believe that "God is satisfied if a person lives the best life he can." Forty-four per cent think salvation depends on being sincere in whatever one believes; 36 per cent say that loving one's neighbor is "absolutely necessary for salvation." And 50 per cent (1 out of 2) say an individual "at birth is neither good nor bad."

*A Study* also reveals that the doctrines of hell and the devil are far from being accepted as true among Lutherans. For instance, 18 per cent outrightly deny the existence of hell, another 16 per cent are uncertain about this matter, and only 53 per cent regard it as "completely true" that there is a devil.

Is it "contrary to the Word of God and unChristian" to accept the belief that human beings descended from some lower animal form? Forty-one per cent agree; 55 per cent disagree, and 4 percent said nothing in response to this question.

Much has been heard in recent years about orthodox Christian belief being related to anti-Semitism. *A Study*, however, shows that when Gospel-oriented respondents are separated from the law-oriented Lutherans, it is not the ortho-

dox believers (those who accept Biblical accounts of miracles, personification of evil, and life after death) who are anti-Semitic, but those who are law-oriented. This, of course, does not mean that all Lutherans are without prejudice. It only means that those who have a correct understanding of God's love and mercy in Christ are not prejudiced.

Although Missouri Synod Lutherans in *A Study* are more conservative than others on most counts, the data show that the differences, for the most part, are not very large. For example, 83 per cent of the LC-MS members believe that Jesus Christ is absolutely necessary for salvation, compared to 71 per cent of the ALC members and 63 per cent of the LCA. (Total for all Lutherans is 74 per cent). Twenty per cent of the LC-MS respondents say that being completely ignorant of Jesus Christ prevents salvation, in contrast to 10 per cent for the ALC and 8 per cent for the LCA. (Total for all Lutherans is 13 per cent).

## Implications

**N**OW that the current beliefs of Lutherans have been established, what can be done to halt the advance of misbelief and unbelief? What can be done to improve the Christian vitality of, say, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod?

Obviously, the best preaching and teaching will never produce perfect results. Jesus' experiences demonstrate this. Yet, this writer is strongly convinced from his experiences in the college classroom that the many erroneous beliefs in the Lutheran Church are significantly related to the manner of preaching and teaching. Lutherans, including the LC-MS, hear a great deal of proclaiming, but little or no defending of the Christian teachings. The Christian faith must be defended, as Peter instructed the early Christians. Preaching and teaching must be done also, apologetically. But how often does this happen in today's Lutheran churches?

## The Need for Apologetics

**T**ODAY, as never before, doctrine upon doctrine is challenged and attacked. Macro-evolutionary theories are widely accepted and taught as though they had been conclusively demonstrated. The historicity of Biblical miracles, including the resurrection of Christ, is openly denied, not because of contrary empirical evidence, but because miracles have been defined as impossible. Freudian, neo-Marxian, and hedonistic models are seen as appropriate ways of viewing man.

In such an environment Lutherans need more than subjective truth claims which have no observable referents. They must be taught, for instance, that Christ's resurrection confirms one's faith, as it did in the case of the disciples.

Today's Lutherans need to understand that Christianity differs from all religions in that the God of Christianity did not merely engage in God-talk, but backed up His claims with many signs and acts. Why? So that people might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (cf. John 20:31). To teach and preach anything less not only leaves members vulnerable to the onslaughts of pagan thought, but is also unbiblical!

## The Biblical Heritage for Apologetics

**F**REQUENTLY when the apologetic method is used to defend God's truth, individuals in Lutheran circles think it

(Continued on Page 9)

## Thoughts . . . (Continued from Page 8)

is unbiblical or sinful. Some even think it denies the reality of faith, which they see as divorced from knowledge. Note a statement by Dr. Alvin Rogness (president of Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota): "To know is not the same as to believe; to believe is not the same as to know. In fact, if you know something, you no longer need to believe it" (*Arena-One*, I, January, 1967, 4).

This is not faith as portrayed in the Bible and in the *Lutheran Confessions*. It is a good example of what Pannenberg calls "blissful gullibility" (*History as Revelation*, 138), or what Montgomery terms "blind credulity." It is this kind of erroneous understanding of faith that leads even college professors to say: "I find no problem in accepting macro-evolutionary propositions that are at variance with the Biblical account of creation because the latter is a theological or 'faith' account while the former is based on scientific knowledge."

The apostles taught and preached apologetically, and thus showed the Christian's faith was linked to factual knowledge. They used all the evidence at their disposal to bring people to accept Christ as Lord and Savior. Paul in Athens pointed the Greeks to the historical fact of Christ's resurrection (Acts 17). To King Agrippa, he said: "the king knows these things . . . for I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this thing was not done in a corner" (Acts 26). And what did he do when he confronted the Corinthians? In effect, he said that if his report of Christ's resurrection was not sufficient, they could check with some 500 others who also had seen the risen Lord (I Cor. 15).

Note also Peter! "We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (II Peter 1:16). Luke declared: "To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs appearing to them during forty days . . ." (Acts 1:3). Luke saw it proper to use the word "proof" which Aristotle used (*Prior Analytics*, II, 27).

These are but some of the examples in the New Testament which show that the Gospel message in the early church was taught apologetically by pointing to reliable knowledge. In fact, not only the apostles, but Jesus Himself pointed to empirical evidence. He told John the Baptist's men: "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up and the poor have good news preached to them" (Matt. 11:4-5). How unlike so many of today's theologians, who in similar circumstances would say: "Go and tell John to have faith!" And what did Jesus do with Thomas who demanded empirical verification of Christ's resurrection? Did He say: "Thomas, you cannot have such evidence, 'for that would be knowing and to know is no longer to believe'?" No! He let Thomas feel the imprint of His wounds, which not so incidentally brought forth one of the most beautiful confessions in Christendom.

### Conclusion

LUTHERAN pastors and teachers must be careful not to push the furniture of Christianity into water-tight compartments by teaching as though the truthfulness of Christianity is not dependent on reliable knowledge. To do so may be a feeble attempt to protect Christianity from criticism, but it also makes it a meaningless religion. Such an approach no longer makes it possible to distinguish Christianity from other religions, whose "faith" and "god-talk" have no

empirical, historical referents from which man can reliably infer the existence of God and His love.

How much of the misbelief and unbelief of today's Lutherans, as shown by *A Study*, is because of the lack of apologetics in Lutheran preaching and teaching? This writer is convinced that the use of apologetics would produce a more vigorous Christian faith than what one generally finds today. In addition, two other effects are bound to occur.

Pastors and teachers would be forced to do more in-depth studying. One cannot defend the Christian teachings by resorting to theological clichés or by making authoritarian-like pronouncements in the pulpit or classroom. Both the defenses and the attacks (the pros and the cons) must be understood well. This requires hard and studious labor.

The use of apologetics would make the manner of teaching and preaching in Synod more in tune with that of the apostles, one of whom commanded Christians: "Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you . . ." (I Peter 3:15). But for this to happen, Synod's Colleges and Seminaries will first have to offer and teach courses in Christian apologetics. At the moment not one of its institutions of higher learning has a single course in apologetics. Not to teach and preach apologetically is to invite an anemic Christianity. It is also to rob Christians of highly beneficial antibodies so necessary in combating the viruses of misbelief and unbelief, which (as seen in *A Study*) have already gained a strong foothold among Lutherans.

May the findings in *A Study of Generations* lead Synod's faithful to recognize the urgent need and the Biblical heritage for apologetics in declaring the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The time to begin is now!

Dr. Alvin J. Schmidt  
Concordia Teachers College  
Seward, Nebraska

### Occasional Papers

A special collection of scholarly essays on the Historical-Critical Method and its meaning for Bible interpretation has been published by *Affirm*. Copies of *Occasional Papers* have been mailed to all pastors and a selected group of laymen. We will be happy to mail to you also this invaluable analysis of Bible interpretation on a first-come, first-served basis, as long as the supply lasts. Individual copies are \$1.00 each, and in bulk orders of 5 or more copies mailed to the same address they are 50 cents each. Send all orders with check or money order to:

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### Letter . . . (Continued from Page 3)

I think you will get some idea as to the phenomenon we are dealing with.

I could go on with more examples. But these two will do for the moment. They will help, I think, in giving you some inkling of how utterly corrupt the administration of the Seminary has become.

Cordially,  
(signed) Martin

Dr. Martin H. Scharlemann  
Nairobi University  
P.O. Box 3097  
Nairobi, Kenya



## 10 Commandments . . . (Continued from Page 6)

Another group of scholars employing the Historical-Critical Method admits that a number of the prohibitions, such as that forbidding murder, adultery and theft, are found in earlier law codes, discovered as a result of Near Eastern archaeology, are therefore earlier than those in Exodus 20, and materials in this chapter must have consequently been borrowed by the Hebrews. Yet another group of scholars asserts that the present form of the Decalogue as found in both Exodus and Deuteronomy does not represent the original form as once given to Israel. It is the contention of these scholars that the Ten Commandments all must be short and be written in a certain style and that what we possess today in the Bible is an expended form and thus we are no longer able to cite the Ten Commandments in their original form. These interpretations all question the reliability of the Biblical text and reject the assertion that God spoke all the words given in Exod. 20:1-17. The proponents of the Historical-Critical Method by the use of different types of criticism, such as radical literary, form criticism and redaction criticism, all employed by the scholars briefly referred to in this article, are able to either reject or explain away one clear Scriptural statement after the other.

A comparison of the two accounts of the Ten Commandments reveals some minor differences. The most pronounced is the reason for keeping the Sabbath day. In Exod. 20:11 the reason given for observing the Sabbath is that God rested on the seventh day from His creative activity and hallowed it for this reason. According to Deut. 5:15 the motivation was the fact that God provided deliverance of Israel after 430 years of Egyptian bondage. It is claimed by the proponents of the Historical-Critical Method that this alleged discrepancy is because of different traditions that were circulating in the northern and southern kingdoms, one found in "E" and the other in "D." In answer to this Dr. Arndt wrote in his book, *Does the Bible Contradict Itself?*: "The simple explanation is that God gave this commandment for several reasons, and on one occasion the one is named, on the other occasion the other. Similarly I may say to some one, Believe in Jesus because He is the true God; at another time I may say to him, believe in Jesus because He is the only Redeemer. No fair-minded person can maintain that I am contradicting myself in this case, for I am not denying the second time what I said the first time, but simply giving an additional reason" (p. 89).

The rejection of the God-given character of the Ten Commandments has led Lutheran Old Testament scholars to claim that these commandments were only for the Jews and are no longer applicable today. Although ancient Jewish society adopted these laws as useful and normative for their day, this does not necessitate, it is claimed, that a commandment like the Sixth Commandment must be obeyed today, thus opening the doors for sexual promiscuity and the new morality.

Dr. Raymond F. Surburg  
Concordia Seminary  
Springfield, Illinois

### Special Cassette Available

A special cassette on the uniqueness of the Missouri Synod is being offered to convention delegates and *Affirm* readers. The cassette by Dr. J. A. O. Preus, President of the Missouri Synod, is available to delegates without charge and to all others for \$2.00 each from Mr. Alfred H. Tessmann, 13761 Joyce Drive, Largo, Florida 33540.

## Polarization . . . (Continued from Page 7)

demanding the public confession of faith in Him—or else He would refuse to recognize neutralists on Judgment Day. A believer must allow no one to stand between himself and the Christ. He who loves father or mother, son or daughter more than Him, our Lord and Savior, is unworthy of eternal life.

The charge of St. Paul to Timothy still stands—II Tim. 4:1-5. We have seen the time "when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths."

The apostolic warning in II Pet. 1:20-2:3 must be heard in the full force of direct application to our condition. It is surely a form of total polarization. Can faithful Christians in good conscience do less?

### Until There Is Peace Again in the Household of Faith

POLARIZATION must continue as long as Christians—pastors and people—are deceived by teachers into believing that historical criticism is not governed by merely rational standards of knowledge.

Polarization is needed to show our Christian people and their pastors "that no prophesy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation."

Polarization must continue in Synod until the propaganda of the schismatics regarding the historical-critical interpretation of the Scriptures has been fully exposed to public view among our people.

Polarization must lead our membership to treasure the first "object" of Synod (Constitution, Art. III) so highly that they will spare nothing to overcome and to eliminate the doctrinal scandal among us.

Dr. Richard H. Klann  
Concordia Seminary  
St. Louis, Missouri

### Copies Available

The March, 1973 issue of *The Springfielder*, theological journal of Concordia Seminary, Springfield, contains several articles which deal with problems troubling Synod today. One article gives an overview of the Historical-Critical Method and considers the legitimacy of its use in interpreting the Scriptures. Another provides an explanation and evaluation of redaction criticism (one of the investigative methodologies of the Historical-Critical Method). Another treats the Law-Gospel principle as used in Biblical interpretation in our day and in our circles. Further insights into the currently controverted issues will be provided in the June issue of *The Springfielder*. Delegates to the New Orleans synodical convention this July may be particularly interested in consulting *The Springfielder's* March and June issues, in order to gain a deeper understanding of matters considerably debated in the church at the present time. The pastors of Synod, who receive *The Springfielder*, may be willing to share their copies with concerned members of their congregations. A limited number of copies of both issues of *The Springfielder* will be available (at \$1.00 each) from the Concordia Seminary Business Office, Concordia Court, Springfield, Illinois 62702.

### Crossroads Endorsements

As *Affirm* goes to press this month, it is reported that a total of 259,282 individuals and congregations have endorsed the Statement. Since its signers put the Crossroads letter into the mails after the first of the year, there have been an average of 15,000 endorsements a week.

## Bottle Game . . . (Continued from Page 4)

Then, beneath each of these are listed antithesis, contents which have been contaminated by liquid from the human reason 'vat'. This helps us recognize the impure, the diluted content.

LATELY another official document has been presented which for the first time starts to let us sample the contents from the bottles on the shelves of the Seminary profs in St. Louis. This was prepared by them, willingly, and bears their stamp of endorsement. Read "Faithful to Our Calling Faithful to Our Lord," Part I. Read it carefully. Read it thoroughly. Then ask yourself a question: "What 'vat' were they drawing from?" Did their bottle labeled 'creation' come from Scripture, or reason? How about inspiration, original sin, the complete work of the Holy Spirit? Be honest, what does the 'liquid' taste like?

"What difference does this make?" you might ask. "These terms have nothing to do with the Gospel." Do you really believe that? Don't forget, one of the bottles up on that shelf is labeled 'Gospel'; and he who starts sampling from the reason 'vat' eventually starts diluting the Gospel content. The very pride and desire which led him to the reason 'vat' will continue to drive him until all the bottles are affected. Look at history, the evidence is clear. And don't forget—only the pure Gospel brings life. Contamination always results in eternal death to those who receive it.

Synod will have a choice when it meets in New Orleans. There you will have an opportunity to decide which set of 'bottles' you want. We cannot have both and restore peace and harmony. Either you will decide to have a Lutheran case of bottles whose contents are drawn from Scripture or else you will choose to substitute a case of bottles filled with diluted, meaningless contents. You cannot hide your head. The problem will not evaporate and go away. You cannot even ride the fence! A vote for one is a vote against the other.

Which will it be? The future of Synod, humanly speaking, will be determined by your answer.

Richard G. Korthals  
Lay Evangelist  
Arcadia, Michigan

## Editorial Policy

While the articles in *Affirm* with their applications to contemporary events rest on Biblical truths, they do not necessarily in all their details represent the views of The Editorial Group. Any divergence of opinion, however, falls within the latitude allowed by Article II of the Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

For *Affirm* is unashamedly dedicated to preserving, under grace, Missouri's priceless theological heritage, based on the Word and set forth in the Book of Concord, as both have been commonly understood in Missouri until the most recent times.

## Contributions

With their generous support many of its friends have made the publication of *Affirm* possible.

You also can help defray its cost by contributing in any amount to:

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Walther Memorial Lutheran Church  
4040 West Fond du Lac Avenue  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53216

## Book Review:

# How Dependable Is the Bible?

**Raymond F. Surburg, *How Dependable Is the Bible?*  
(Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott—Holman, 1972).  
204 pages, Cloth, \$5.95.**

CHRISTIANITY Today, March 2, 1973 devoted virtually all of its pages to summarizing, according to various categories, "Significant Books of 1972." Standing next to first in the section on "The Bible as a Whole" was Dr. Raymond F. Surburg's (a frequent contributor to *Affirm* and Professor at Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois) book on the Bible's reliability. Here's *Christianity Today's* assessment:

Raymond F. Surburg in *HOW DEPENDABLE IS THE BIBLE?* (Holman) traces the history of criticism of each part of the Scripture, and briefly defends an orthodox position for each subject covered. The book is useful because, though written for laymen, it contains a wealth of scholarly data in a form that will be palatable to the average Christian layman.

Little more really need be added to encourage the reader to get the book, if he's at all interested in knowing what's going on in Biblical studies today. A lot of important information is literally packed between the covers: chapters on Biblical criticism, Old and New Testament; the history of the historical-critical technique (particularly the adverse tendencies and effects), also in connection with the Biblical concepts of revelation and inspiration; the unassailable reliability of the Biblical text; the historicity of Old Testament content and its prophecies; the New Testament Gospels and epistles; etc. Almost anything you want to know about higher criticism's attack on the Bible—all the facts, leading spokesmen, trends, without getting bogged down in endless details—are neatly laid out for easy reach. Dr. Surburg has sifted through countless details for you and drawn things together in easy-to-get-at chapters. His book, thus, is an invaluable tool and guide for gaining competence in the field of Biblical studies. It fills a much needed niche in the contemporary struggle within Christianity (also within our own synod) for Biblical controls in theology, concluding with an affirmative punch in support of God's inspired Holy Scriptures. (Available through Concordia Seminary Bookstore, Springfield, Illinois.)

The Rev. E. F. Klug, M.A.  
Concordia Seminary  
Springfield, Illinois

## Doctrinal Concerns Program

The Doctrinal Concerns Program has been organized and is active in every District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, according to Mr. C. A. Swanson of Cincinnati, Ohio, co-chairman of the DCP. Mr. Henry Hilst of Mason City, Illinois, serves also as co-chairman. They were chosen by the DCP Steering Committee, consisting of the following: Mr. A. H. Wippermann, Topeka, Kans.; The Rev. W. J. Sohns, Broomfield, Colo.; Mr. Ed Scott, Denver, Colo.; Dr. Robert Preus, Clayton, Mo.; Mr. G. Robert Murphy, Gretna, La.; Mr. David Gaertz, St. Catharine's, Ontario, Canada; and Mr. Larry Brown, Southgate, Mich.

## What are They Afraid Of?

"THAT brings up a question" is a comment frequently heard when we begin to put things together. For the sake of perspective, let us review some recent events and see what sort of a question comes up as we "put everything together."

When Synodical President Preus, in harmony with his synodically established responsibility to supervise the doctrine of those employed by Synod, asked (May 17, 1972) the St. Louis Seminary faculty members to respond individually to his "Statement," the faculty (majority) responded with pain, distress and resistance. This, despite the scriptural urging that we seize every opportunity to speak out regarding the hope that is within us. One wonders what the faculty was afraid of. The frantic effort to hide behind the skirts of protocol and procedure neither impressed nor misled anyone.

However, when the Council of (District) Presidents asked (Sept. 21, 1972) the same faculty members for individual statements of faith, they (majority) responded with alacrity. One wonders about the change of heart. Especially when the request of the Council of Presidents was clearly out of order. Its duties and limitations are clear in the synodical *Handbook*.

Still putting things together—Synod's top doctrinal board is the Commission on Theology and Church Relations. Synod assured itself of a broad spectrum of talent in the CTCR membership. Six members are elected by Synod, five are elected by the Council of Presidents, three each are elected or appointed by the two Seminary faculties, and six are appointed by the Synodical President in consultation with the vice presidents. The CTCR's "primary function (is) guidance to the Synod in matters of theology and church relations." The CTCR is to deal with "theological issues and questions."

THE CTCR is therefore the proper synodically determined place for a sober and balanced evaluation of theological writings. A more important theological statement for our time than Dr. Preus' *Statement* is hard to imagine. We would thus expect it to receive the attention of the CTCR. Dr. Preus, indeed, welcomed the CTCR's evaluation. He wanted the "Statement" tested. The Council of Presidents voiced no objection to having the "Statement" evaluated by the CTCR. Apparently the Council thought that this was proper.

Now, when the faculty responded to the (out of order) request of the Council of Presidents for individual statements of faith, the faculty majority gave its response not only to the

Council of Presidents but also circularized Synod (published as "Faithful to our Calling Faithful to our Lord," I and II). Would not one expect that the Seminary President, the faculty, and the Council of Presidents would welcome an evaluation of these joint and individual statements by the CTCR? One indeed would so expect, assuming a sincerity in the oft-repeated desire for clarifying and settling Synod's doctrinal problems.

Yet, when the CTCR received and discussed the request of several district presidents for just such an evaluation for the edifying of the church, Seminary President Tietjen, a member of the CTCR, objected vigorously. Has the Seminary faculty actually reached the point of arrogance at which it says in effect to Synod, "We will issue doctrinal statements if and when we choose, but don't you dare test or evaluate them"? Or was the objection motivated by fear that these doctrinal statements of the faculty cannot stand up?

THE Council of Presidents, which by its silence apparently considered it fitting and proper that Dr. Preus' *Statement* be examined and evaluated by the CTCR, suddenly had a change of heart when it came to an evaluation of the faculty's statements. Indeed, the Council of Presidents actually voted (22 to 12) to request the CTCR not to evaluate the faculty statements which had been circularized throughout Synod! There is good news and encouragement in the CTCR's resolve to proceed with an evaluation. The delegates to the New Orleans convention will benefit by it.

Meanwhile, one legitimately wonders why Seminary President Tietjen was happy to have the faculty members issue statements of faith but does not want to have those statements evaluated by the CTCR.

When the CTCR resolved to evaluate Dr. Preus' "Statement" the Council of Presidents said nothing. When the CTCR resolved to evaluate the faculty's statements of faith, the Council of Presidents requested that the CTCR not do so.

All of which does "bring up a question." In fact, it brings up two of them. They are honest, fair, and important questions. They deserve answers. The questions:

First, what is seminary President Tietjen afraid of?  
Second, what is the liberal majority of the Council of Presidents afraid of?

The Rev. Ewald J. Otto, Pastor  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Quincy, Illinois

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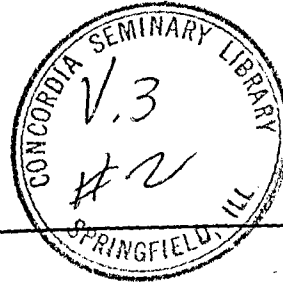
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"I believed,  
and therefore have  
I spoken"  
2 Cor. 4:13

## Questions And Answers For Laymen And Laywomen

### *Missouri Synod Issues for New Orleans*

1. *What are some of the issues facing Missouri at New Orleans?*

There are many issues but among the major ones are the ordination of women pastors, how to interpret the Bible, and knowing God's authority or will in the church.

2. *Aren't the issues just political squabbles between church leaders looking for power?*

Any denomination or group of churches is going to have its politics, since every organization, including our own families, has a political structure. Many synodical officials will be elected at New Orleans, but election procedures should not obscure the really basic or theological problems confronting Missouri.

3. *Aren't theological problems the job of the clergy?*

Yes, they are, but all Christians have the duty to know what their particular church teaches and then to accept it or disapprove of it. Luther asserted this in his teaching about the universal priesthood of all believers. Anyhow, seminary problems have a way of becoming problems of congregations very quickly.

4. *What problems will confront our church first?*

There are many answers to this one, but the ordination of women pastors might be the first problem because even now we can see women in pastor's robes conducting church services in other Lutheran synods. For many Missouri congregations this will be a shock if it ever happens in our church services.

5. *Should we oppose women pastors because it shocks our members?*

No, this is not the reason. The reason is that God forbids women in regular worship services to teach and exercise religious authority over men.

6. *Isn't this really the opinion of St. Paul, who might have been a child of his times and an anti-feminist?*

This is not really St. Paul's opinion. He said he was taught it by Jesus. The teaching against women pastors according to St. Paul goes back to the creation of the man before the woman (Genesis 2) and to the Fall into sin where Adam is held accountable for allowing Eve take control (Genesis 3). It is absurd to say that St. Paul was against women. Both Jesus and St. Paul taught that men and women were co-heirs of salvation equally.

7. *Don't the Gospels say that women "ministered" to Jesus?*

All followers of Jesus ministered to Him and we must too. But the word "minister" in the Gospels does not mean pastor as it sometimes does today. The Bible never speaks of women pastors. All Christians are "ministers" because they serve Jesus, but all ministers are not pastors. God has restricted the pastoral office to men trained in the Bible and who can teach and preach.

8. *Aren't all Christians equal?*

The New Testament teaches that those who believe equally share in salvation, but equality in faith does not mean each has the right to perform any tasks he wants.

(Continued on Page 2)

**Questions . . . (Continued from Page 1)**

Children may not exercise their parent's rights. Men and women have duties and rights which may not be interchanged.

**9. What about women parochial and Sunday school school teachers, deaconesses, and evangelism callers?**

Women may assume most public offices in the church—even as Synod and District administrators—but may not become supervisors—pastors—over churches or groups of churches. They may teach children and may even teach men privately as Priscilla did in the Book of Acts. They can have roles in the public worship services, but they are not allowed by God to preach and supervise at the Lord's Supper.

**10. Is the problem of women pastors the most important?**

It is the easiest to understand, but behind this problem and others is the really important one—*interpreting the Bible!*

**11. Don't we Lutherans allow freedom in interpreting the Bible?**

Yes, every Christian must freely come to his own conclusions and should not be forced to certain interpretations by church authority against his will, as the pope tried to force people in Luther's day. This does not mean that Lutherans allow any and all interpretations of the Bible. Luther did not accept the idea that bread and wine only represented Jesus' body and blood. Our Lutheran Confessions contain what interpretations we accept and reject. These are to be willingly accepted. Those who do not accept them are not to be called Lutherans.

**12. What is one of the big problems in interpreting or understanding the Bible in the Missouri Synod today?**

It is a very simple one: *Do we have to affirm that what the Bible reports as having actually happened did in fact happen?*

Let's have an example. The one which everyone talks about is Adam and Eve. Did Adam and Eve live as real persons in history or do we have in Genesis 3 a story about how every man is in the predicament of sin and is saved by God.

**13. Isn't Genesis 3 a story of sin and salvation?**

Yes, but this account of sin and salvation is really dependent on there being two real historical persons, Adam and Eve.

**14. There are many stories in the Bible which did not happen in history. What about the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son or the Parables?**

Jesus told these stories as illustrations or to answer people's questions or teach them truths about Himself and heaven. But the accounts of crossing the Red Sea, the Virgin Birth, Jesus' walking on water, or even the Resurrection are not mere illustrations. Jesus was actually born of a virgin, walked on water, rose from the dead.

**15. Do pastors who doubt some of the Bible's history hold to Christian doctrine?**

Strange as it might seem, they do make this claim. They say that they can doubt some of the history in the Bible and still believe the Bible's doctrine as taught in the Lutheran Confessions.

**16. Aren't Lutherans, people who hold to the Lutheran Confessions?**

To be Lutheran or Christian it is not enough simply to hold to a set of abstract doctrine, whether Lutheran or otherwise.

**17. Is this to deny that Lutherans demand doctrinal commitment?**

Lutherans, indeed all true Christians, hold to a set of doctrines, like the Apostles Creed or the Small Catechism, but much more basic to Christian faith is that we hold that what the Bible reports as having happened did in fact happen. The truth of doctrine is based in part upon historical happenings as recorded in the Bible.

**18. Isn't this really a modern philosophical problem?**

Yes, but it is a problem that also confronted the apostles of Jesus. An example: John wrote his Gospel when some Christians were denying that God became a human being. We call this the Incarnation. They denied the Resurrection also. For this reason John wrote so deliberately: "THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH." John tells us that after the Resurrection Jesus dared to ask Thomas to put his fingers into the wounds made on the cross. John is saying loud and clear: IT DID HAPPEN.

**19. Do we then only have to hold the Incarnation and Resurrection as real happenings in space and time and in our history?**

Incarnation and Resurrection are the real important steps in God's plan of salvation recorded in the Bible, but Christians will want to hold to all of God's actions in history as having really happened.

**20. What are some of these other actions?**

Whatever the Bible records as having happened did in fact happen whether or not it was common occurrence or a miracle. The Flood is just as true as Solomon's building a temple. The Virgin Birth of Jesus is just as historical as Caesar's decree. The Bible's history is just as much history as what has happened in American history.

**21. Does this mean that we cannot doubt any of these happenings in the Bible?**

That's right! We cannot doubt them and still call ourselves faithful disciples of Jesus. We may question the "why" and "wherefore" of what God did in a historical event, but we dare not doubt or question the event as real or actual history, as the world understands history.

**22. What is this business of knowing God's authority in the church?**

If there is a God, He must be the authority. Who doubts this? All confessing Christians accept God's authority. The real difference between Christians is how we know God's authority. Roman Catholics say the real authority is the church or pope. Some say the "faith experience" of believers. Luther said the Bible. For him it was a clear book given by God through prophets and apostles.

**23. Well, what's the problem in Missouri today?**

Not everyone understands the problem, but there are two easy-to-recognize groups who differ with each other. One group says the Bible is the authority and they are called "Fundamentalists." The other group says the Gospel is the authority and they are called "Gospel Reductionists." The first group likes to be called "conservatives" and the second, "moderates." But let's not argue about names.

**24. This is a little confusing because I accept the Bible and the Gospel. Can you give me an illustration?**

Let's use the ordination of women pastors, since we have referred to it above. Those who assert the Bible's authority agree with St. Paul that no woman should regularly lead church services as a pastor does. Those who assert the Gospel's authority find nothing in the Gospel about women pastors at all, so they allow the practice.

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# Wherein Does The Historical-Critical Method Differ From The Historical-Grammatical Method?

THE Historical-Critical Method (hereafter referred to as HCM) is not the same as the Historical-Grammatical Method (hereafter referred to as HGM), even though both methods have some features in common. The very facts that historians of Biblical interpretation describe the origin of the HCM as occurring after the HGM and that major differences between the two methods are pointed out, these facts ought to make even the ordinary Bible reader and Christian realize that something serious is involved. Since theological professors and leaders in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod insist that the HCM must now be employed by professors, teachers and pastors to do justice to the Biblical text, this fact raises the question for members and pastors alike, namely: Why are the men assigned with the preparation of pastors and teachers for the synod instructed to forsake the interpretative methodology that was employed by Luther (in the Small and Large Catechisms, the Smalcald Articles), by Melancthon (in the Augsburg Confession and the Apology of the Augsburg Confession), by the authors of the Formula of Concord, by outstanding Lutheran theologians living during the nearly four hundred years that have elapsed since the adoption of the Book of Concord in 1580? Furthermore, the founding fathers of the LC-MS rejected rationalism and anti-Christian philosophies, controlling presuppositions of the HCM, while the use of the HGM is evident in the doctrinal essays of the three volumes of *The Abiding Word* (1946-47), which set forth the doctrinal position of the LC-MS at its centennial. Many articles in *The Lutheran Cyclopedia* (Concordia, 1954) also employ the HGM; articles in the latter repudiate what is involved in the use of the HCM.

What are the implications for the future spiritual life of Synod, if this new system of Biblical interpretation is pursued, advocated and defended?

According to Protestant interpreters, who have employed the HGM and have developed the method fully, the following may be said to be the essential components of the HGM:

1. Determining the text.
2. Taking note of the literary form of a passage.
3. Ascertaining the historical situation.
4. Grasping the meaning which the Holy Spirit intended a text to have for the original authors and readers (The New Testament often helps the readers, in fact sometimes determines the meaning of an Old Testament text).
5. Understanding the passage in the light out of which it emerged.

These are the elements of the HGM according to M. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*; L. Fuerbringer, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, B. Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*; L. Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*; or A. B. Michelsen, *Interpreting the Bible and other hermeneutical manuals*.

THE Methodist professor, Terry, wrote many years ago in describing the practitioner of the HGM as doing the following:

He will master the language of the writer, the particular dialect used, and his peculiar style and the manner of expression. He will inquire into the circumstances under which he wrote, the manners and customs of the age, and the purpose or object

which he had in view. He has a right to assume that no sensible author will be inconsistent with himself, or seek to bewilder and mislead the reader (p. 70).

The fundamental approach of the HGM is to gather from the Bible itself the precise meaning which the inspired authors have recorded. The same principles, the same grammatical processes that are employed by those who endeavor to understand a human writing are utilized by proponents of the HGM. The Biblical interpreter does not try to prove or disprove what the text asserts but accepts the text as clearly setting forth what God would have His creatures accept and not to question or reject teachings and truths that appear not to be acceptable to human reason or are not palatable to the whims or fads of a given time period.

In the discussion of the HCM honesty requires that this method should be set forth as its originators have conceived and explained it and as its present proponents use and defend it. The Commission on Theology and Church Relations' *A Lutheran Stance toward Biblical Studies*, published in 1966, in many respects a very fine and useful document, has puzzled many of its readers by the fact, that while listing the five components of the HGM, it proceeds to call them the HCM, a characterization that is inadequate as setting forth really what is involved in using what is a very complex methodology.

The practitioners of the HCM approach the Bible with different presuppositions than those used by the HGM. Presuppositions of necessity determine how a method is used and naturally its outcomes. The users of the HGM have and always regarded the Bible as the inspired, inerrant and infallible Word of God. Because ultimately the Holy Spirit was the author of the Bible's 66 books, it has been the conviction of historic Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism, and various Protestant denominations that the Holy Scriptures are qualitatively different from all other books and from the sacred scriptures of other religions. The inerrancy of Scripture has been affirmed by Luther, the Lutheran Confessions and has been set forth by the LC-MS in synodically-adopted doctrinal resolutions. A Bible replete with errors, mistakes, contradictions, and ethical misrepresentations is not consonant with a Scriptures, described by Paul as "God-inspired," or "God-breathed."

IT IS the claim of the HCM proponents that scientific exegesis was only possible when the doctrine of verbal and plenary inspiration was surrendered. Not only the Bible's verbal and plenary inspiration are repudiated by the users of the HCM, but they have also attacked the Biblical canon, and are not only willing to recognize the Apocrypha as Word of God but go so far as to contend that any writing, ancient or modern, that enables men to be motivated to lead better moral and spiritual lives is inspired. Scholars are speaking about the pronouncements of church groups as inspired, even though the latter may reach conclusions that are contradictory to the revealed, written Word of God.

The term "historical-critical" is very instructive. The HCM has espoused a new view of history, one that holds to a closed universe and interprets events according to criteria

(Continued on Page 6)



## New Orleans: Hour of Decision

ST. PAUL has nothing on the 1,000 or so men and women who are delegates to the New Orleans Convention. They echo his words, "Who is sufficient for these things?" as they contemplate the Convention Workbook (the "gold book") with its 477 pages of reports and proposed resolutions.

So the delegates pray. But they also do their homework. For they know that in many areas New Orleans will be an "hour of decision." How they vote on various issues will chart Missouri's course for years to come; indeed, may well decide Synod's very existence.

Not the least of the decisions which can no longer be postponed is one which concerns the relation of the Council of Presidents (the presidents of the 41 districts) to the President of Synod, and the powers and functions of both. The gold book has at least 47 overtures which speak directly to this question.

Let's get at the problem by starting with what Synod itself has said about the Council of Presidents and its area of responsibility. The Synodical Handbook (3.41) says "Each District President . . . represents the Synod in his respective territory. He shall therefore periodically report to the President of the Synod, and the President of the Synod shall meet with the District Presidents at least once a year for the purpose of counseling together regarding the work of the Synod." Article XII states that the District Presidents shall "See to it that all resolutions of the Synod which concern the Districts are made known to the Districts and are carried out by them;" and that they shall "Submit an annual report of their administration to the President of the Synod and, in general, permit him to obtain all necessary insight into their official activities as District Presidents."

THE function of the Council of Presidents is thus given in general terms, but the language and intent is clear. The District Presidents are to be the arm of the Synodical President. They are to counsel with him. Then they are to take home, carry out, and report back.

That the present Council of Presidents has violated this intent is abundantly clear. For a long list of particulars the delegate may consult Overture 5-76A (Workbook, pp. 232-233) and Overture 3-159 (p. 156) from the Board of Directors of the Montana District.

The Council's failures have been both by omission and commission. It has repeatedly injected itself into the Synodical President's supervision of doctrine at the St. Louis Seminary and into the Commission on Theology and Church Relation's work of evaluating doctrinal statements coming from the faculty, to name but two major areas of interference.

On the omission side, it repeatedly has refused to defend the President of Synod. When the President of the St. Louis Seminary, speaking before the Council, labeled the Synodical President's theology "sub-Biblical and un-Lutheran," the latter properly and promptly asked that this charge either be substantiated or retracted. Amazingly, the Council did nothing. In effect by its silence it allowed the charges to stand. Again, at another meeting, the Council was unwilling to adopt the simple statement that it found "nothing contrary to Scripture and the Confessions in the doctrinal content of *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*". This, despite the fact that the CTCR, Synod's top doctrinal commission, has evaluated Dr. Preus' *Statement* and found it doctrinally sound.

IT IS, indeed, a long and undisputed list of grievances which shows that the Council of Presidents has both failed to support the Synodical President and brashly has entered areas of activity clearly assigned by Synod to other commissions, committees and individuals.

One is not surprised, therefore, to find in the Convention Workbook at least 33 overtures taking the Council of Presidents to task. These proposed resolutions range from fairly mild ones calling upon the Council to mind its own synodically-designed business to strongly worded requests that Synod "reprimand" and "censure" the Council. There are overtures calling for a strengthening of the Synodical President's hand. One even asks that we follow the ALC in giving the Synodical President the power to dismiss District Presidents from office.

All of this one would expect as a concerned response to the obvious invasion of the Synodical President's functions by a Council of Presidents which unabashedly seeks more power.

But the delegates should know and be forewarned that there are those who uphold the Council of Presidents and want this shared power (collegiality) legitimized. There are eight overtures asking, in effect, that the Council of Presidents' position be made equal to or even superior to that of the Synodical President.

Whether this attitude stems from the current fad and mistaken idea that somehow things are done better if more people get into the act, or from a desire to negate the conservative stand of the present Synodical President is not for us to say.

Whatever the reasons behind these moves, if they were to succeed, the result would be an open door to increased doctrinal indifference, as well as a guarantee of administrative chaos.

The Rev. Ewald J. Otto, Pastor  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Quincy, Illinois

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## 'Thy Word Is Truth'—AND Error?

BACK in 1966, Hugh J. Schonfeld published his sensational *The Passover Plot*, presenting supposed detailed evidence from the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls to prove "Jesus planned his own arrest, crucifixion and resurrection, that he arranged to be drugged on the cross, simulating death so that He could later be safely removed and thus bear out the Messianic prophecies."

While Dr. Schonfeld does not question the existence of the historical Jesus, he rejects all that is "unscientific and supernatural" filling every gap in historical knowledge with the most rational assumption.

Today, also many Lutheran theologians agree with the spirit and content of the *Passover Plot*. Using the prevailing, popular Historical-Critical Method as basic principles for Bible interpretation, the Creation account, the Biblical history of Adam and Eve and of the children of Israel, the predicted Virgin-Birth of Christ, all the New Testament miracles of Jesus are dismissed, thereby destroying the credibility of "God-breathed" Holy Scripture.

While all liberal (moderate) scholars may not yet deny the deity of Christ and the factuality of His historic resurrection, by consistently using the basic principles of the accepted Historical-Critical Method of "demythologization," they will be forced by the application of their own logic to also accept Dr. Schonfeld's total destruction of the hope of salvation in Jesus as the Son of the living God.

All this should alert and alarm Missouri to the fact that also our current doctrinal difficulties involve more than a "tempest-in-the-teapot" disagreement between synodical personalities.

We should all be happy to learn that the majority of our St. Louis Seminary faculty in their "Affirmations of Faith" make a fitting confession to which all Christians agree.

However, most unfortunately, they also side-step, side-track, ignore the major perplexity, by avoiding to make also definite declarations on the main points at issue—which ultimately touch the very heart of scriptural Confessional Lutheranism and historical Christianity.

BASICALLY the essential differences between our current two theological camps is that President Preus, the Fact-Finding Committee, our Commission on Theology and Church Relations regard the Scriptures in their *totality* as a direct revelation from God, holding that "God-breathed" Scripture is an instrumental means God selected and provided to reveal His will and purpose to mankind, and *therefore* is to be regarded as absolutely authoritative in every respect and inerrant in every detail.

Despite the use of traditional terminology ("inspiration"), the majority of the faculty does not agree that we dare not set aside even one word of Holy Writ.

This is evidenced in their statement in "Discussion Nine" of the faculty statement, *Faithful Witness* (pgs. 39-42). They correctly state:

As Lutherans, however we operate with presuppositions when we approach the Scriptures. These include:

- 1) the centrality of the Gospel in the Scriptures;
- 2) the distinction between the Law, which always accuses, and the Promise, which always assures;
- 3) the Spirit gift of faith as the prerequisite to

receive the Promise and obey the Commandments of God (p. 40).

Fine. However, rather conspicuous by its absence from this list is also the all important, essential Scriptural and Lutheran presupposition that Scripture *itself* is an infallible revelation of God to man.

On this most basic vital point our Lutheran *Formula of Concord* begins:

We believe, teach, and confess that the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments are the only rule and norm according to which all doctrines and teachers alike must be appraised and judged. (Tappert, p. 464).

In Luther's writings we have abundant evidence that he held God has revealed Himself infallibly in the Scriptures and that this revelation includes propositions and statements objectively, absolutely, true in themselves. According to Luther, the Gospel is the central doctrine of Scripture. At the same time he insists that the same Scripture also makes other assertions that are to be believed:

Scripture makes the straight forward affirmation that the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Unpardonable Sin are facts. There is nothing obscure or ambiguous about that.

IN "Discussion One" the faculty asserts God's spokesmen speak "primarily to our faith rather than our intellect"—holding that the "holy men of God" could not present affirmations that are both clear and factual?

In "Discussion Two" the faculty does not regard Genesis 2-3 as a statement—account of actual happenings, historical events, but suggest here we have poetic, dramatic literature, parables, "myths," not to be taken literally, including the historical-critical conclusions that Adam and Eve are not "specific individuals."

In "Discussion Four" we must sense the faculty position that when we as Lutherans "engage in the theological enterprise," the faculty no longer wants to begin with the foundational Reformation "twin-truths" of *Scripture alone, Christ alone*. Does not this giving up of *Scripture alone* for some other equally fundamental assumption imply that since the Scriptures can and do err, man himself must finally ascertain what is true and false, must decide what is to be believed, what is to be rejected?

Obviously the faculty thereby refuses to accept "the assumption that the doctrine of Scriptural infallibility guarantees the validity of our theology or our interpretation of the Scriptures" (p. 20).

In fact, its members plainly state that to do this "would not be Lutheran" (p. 20).

Not Lutheran?

As a simple matter of history and record, Luther and the Lutheran Confessions have assumed, taken for granted, inspired Holy Scripture is inerrant, even as the church has always confessed together with Christ and the Apostles.

Would JESUS direct us to the Scriptures without thereby also assuring us of the accuracy of the writers, who under the operation of the Spirit of all Truth produced the Sacred Scriptures?

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## Method . . . (Continued from Page 3)

which will not admit that history is "His-story." The new concept of history will not brook interference from outside the universe and interprets historical happenings as to whether or not they conform to mechanistic laws. Thus miracles are impossible and the over one hundred miracles of the two Testaments are either rejected or reinterpreted.

The second component is "critical" in HCM. This represents the attitude of the HCM toward Biblical materials and contends that only those teachings and doctrines are to be taught that can reasonably be defended and that will not turn people off by being intellectually offensive.

The supernatural, which pervades the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation, is suspect according to the critical approach. This forces the abandonment of the Biblical doctrine of revelation. That God gave direct communications to Adam, Noah, Abram, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David and many others and that this process went on till the end of the Apostolic period is considered impossible and, therefore, assertions to this effect are not true according to the HCM. The denial of direct revelations to wise men, prophets, apostles and evangelists results in a type of interpretation that will differ radically from the Bible's own presentation.

Predictions about the future of Israel and Judah, prophecies about the Messiah are found throughout the Old Testament. Predictive prophecy is rejected by users of the HCM. Since man cannot know the future, human beings therefore are unable to know what will occur in ten, twenty, fifty or a hundred years. Thus all depictions in the Bible are written as futuristic must have occurred after the events that they announce; this is the usual method of interpreting prophetic materials by the proponents of the HCM.

THE HCM is a combination method that is constantly changing and evolving. The HCM began in the days of the Enlightenment or Rationalism with the adoption of a radical type of literary criticism. Most members of our congregations are not aware of the complexities of all that is involved in the employment of the HCM. Those who have honestly and adequately described the entire gamut of the types of criticism involved, have stated that the following types of criticism are employed: textual, form, redaction, tradition, and *Sachkritik* or content criticism. These various forms of criticism are utilized today in various ways when interpreting either the Old or New Testaments.

Both the HGM and the HCM recognize the need for *textual criticism*, since the original writings (the autographs) are no longer available for consultation and, therefore, Biblical students are dependent on copies into which mistakes have crept, either unintentionally or intentionally. The science of textual criticism is legitimate and necessary in order to establish the correct text. In addition, both the HGM and the HCM use *literary criticism*, also called *higher criticism* (in the good sense). Higher criticism or literary criticism deals with such questions as: Who wrote the book or books (like the Pentateuch, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, I and II Chronicles)? When written? Where composed? Is the writing or are the books from one author? What is the purpose of a book or group of books in the sacred canon? These legitimate questions and answers to these questions often are of great significance for the interpretation of a book or group of books.

With the Age of Rationalism there was adopted a radical type of higher criticism that rejected many clear assertions about Biblical books as given by the Bible itself. The Docu-

mentary Hypothesis, rejecting the Mosaic authorship of the first five Old Testament books, postulated the existence of four different documents, known as J, E, D, and P, alleged sources that were written separately between 950 B.C. and 450 B.C. These are supposed to have been woven into the present Pentateuch and are full of contradictory accounts about the same events, contain misinformation and also give us differing theologies. This position is wholly unreconcilable with an inerrant, infallible Scriptures. Much of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel is denied to these prophets. Most Biblical Old Testament books according to HCM are composite and contain later additions that were not spoken by the writer whose name frequently is given in the opening verse of the book. The radical literary criticism that is part of the HCM refuses to accept New Testament statements about the Mosaic authorship, the historicity of Jonah, the prophetic character of Daniel, the Davidic authorship of Psalms 2, 16, 32, 110. In the New Testament the Pauline authorship of Ephesians, Titus, I and II Timothy is rejected, as is the Petrine authorship of I and II Peter. The Gospels are portrayed as contradicting each other on many matters.

FORM CRITICISM began with the early 20th century as a reaction to radical Biblical criticism. Herman Gunkel was the father of this new type of criticism which stressed the oral, pre-written transmission of different types of literary genre and engaged in speculation as to how the written text is supposed to have reached its present form. Different life situations demanded the reinterpretation of a story so that what is now found in the text is quite different from what actually happened. In 1919 form criticism was adopted by Dibelius, Schmidt and especially by Bultmann and applied to the Gospels. While the HGM always had recognized the existence of different literary types in both Testaments, the new form criticism introduced such literary genre as myth, saga, legend, folktale, forms which eliminated the factuality of many Biblical stories. The net result of this type of criticism was to cast uncertainty on the canonical text. The employment of form criticism in the Old Testament resulted in the repudiation of much material in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, I and II Samuel as historical. In the New Testament its application to the Gospels has resulted in questioning the historicity and facticity of much of what Jesus said and did. Form criticism is a revolutionary technique that has serious consequences for a Christian's knowledge of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Redaction criticism, the latest development as an aspect of the HCM, set in as a reaction to the unsatisfactory features of form criticism. Bornkamm, Maxsen and Conzelmann and others following their lead, have developed a new type of criticism to the Gospels. According to these German New Testament scholars the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke were not historians but theologians, who in the interest of their theologies ascribed to Jesus words that He never spoke and gave him credit for things He never did. The Evangelists manufactured materials, not factual, to create a certain kind of theology. Thus redaction criticism attacks the historicity and reliability of much Gospel data.

*Sachkritik* (content criticism) is a type which evaluates a given Biblical book by what the critic believes should have been written. That means that the critics place themselves over the Holy Spirit who ultimately caused Biblical writers to pen the words that He wished them to record.

Despite all protestations to the contrary, the HCM, as a

(Continued on Page 8)

**Questions . . .** (Continued from Page 2)

**25. This is a terrible choice. Do I have to choose between the Bible or the Gospel for my Christian life? Can't I keep both?**

Yes, you can keep Bible and Gospel, but you keep them in different ways.

**26. What does "different ways" mean?**

Even though you believe in the Bible and believe in the Gospel, you believe in each differently.

**27. How can a person believe in two different ways?**

This sounds confusing. Lutherans believe in the Gospel for salvation. It is what we call *sola fide*, faith in Jesus alone saves. Nothing else saves! No faith means damnation. Really it is not the Gospel that saves, but Jesus' life and death which is the content of the Gospel. Lutherans believe the Bible, because they accept God's Word as truth. Certainly believing the Bible does not save, but we do accept it as true.

**28. Then those who say that the Gospel is the authority in the church are right?**

No, they are not. The Gospel tells us what God has done. It does not tell us what to do.

**29. Then how do I know what to do or believe?**

God's Word.

**30. Where does a person obtain God's Word?**

In the past God spoke through appointed spokesmen for Him called prophets and apostles. Their words are recorded in the Bible for us who live thousands of years after them. Luther's great discovery was that he found the voice of God in the Bible. There he found a God who condemned him and who saved him in Jesus. Lutherans use "Law and Gospel" as a kind of shorthand for this.

**31. Then the Bible tells us the Law and the Gospel?**

Yes, but you can just as easily say that God's Word or God Himself tells us what is Law and Gospel, since the Bible is God's Word intended for all people.

**32. But we don't follow everything the Bible says, like the Old Testament laws. Does not the Gospel tell us the parts of the Bible that we do not have to keep?**

All of the Bible is God's Word, even those parts which we do not keep today. The reason that we do not keep this is because God in the Bible tells what applies to us. We do not make this decision ourselves. Jesus as a Jew kept all the laws. Some laws were only for men or women or Jews. The ceremonial laws pointed to Christ. When Jesus came as the Christ, these laws outlived their purpose and were no longer necessary or valid for those after Christ.

**33. So then the Gospel does have more authority than the Bible?**

No! Remember that it is God who made the laws and determined for how long they would apply. God's moral law, the Ten Commandments apply to all people, not just Jews, at all times.

**34. Well, then the Gospel destroys the Law?**

Quite to the contrary. Christ fulfilled the Law with His life and suffered its penalties. Those who believe the Gospel can begin to fulfill the Law and thus please God. Because of sin, this can never be done perfectly.

**35. Do we refuse to ordain women pastors because the Bible forbids it or because of the Gospel?**

Both. Ordaining women pastors is against God's Law, St. Paul says it is. If we break publicly the Law, we will thereby also undermine the Gospel's effectiveness which is God's own enforcement of His divine Law.

**36. Does this mean we are saved by keeping the Law, at least in part?**

The Gospel, and the Gospel alone, saves the sinner, but if we continually break the Law in a public way in worship services—as would be the case with women pastors—we would be destroying the Gospel's message which can only function for salvation against the backdrop of God's moral law. Those who believe the Gospel will never want to break this law continually, deliberately and publicly at church services.

**37. Are you saying that Christians have to keep the Law?**

For salvation, no. To please God, yes. This is what Jesus, St. Paul and our Lutheran Confessions teach.

**38. These questions do not sound like political or hard to understand problems.**

They're not! They're problems that concerned Christians in the days of the apostles and Luther had to face and grasp.

**39. Does Missouri have other problems?**

The church will always have doctrinal problems. Jesus taught this. Many Christians think that it is unChristian to have problems in the church. Because of sin and Satan, we will always have these kinds of problems. Still we are under obligation from God to speak the truth and clear up problems. In heaven to be sure these problems will disappear, but we are not in heaven and we dare not act like we are. Just as Jesus gave true confessions in the midst of erroneous teachers, so He commands us to make confessions. There are other problems, but if we have solved these, we will have done a great deal.

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## Affirm

*Affirm*, sponsored by Balance Inc., is published monthly or more frequently by a group of its members concerned about theological and related developments in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

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### Editorial Policy

While the articles in *Affirm* with their applications to contemporary events rest on Biblical truths, they do not necessarily in all their details represent the views of The Editorial Group. Any divergence of opinion, however, falls within the latitude allowed by Article II of the Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

For *Affirm* is unashamedly dedicated to preserving, under grace, Missouri's priceless theological heritage, based on the Word and set forth in the Book of Concord, as both have been commonly understood in Missouri until most recent times.

# The News Front

## At the Crossroads in 1941?

The *Concordia Theological Monthly* of February 1941 carried an analysis of where the Lutheran church then stood, written by Dr. John C. Mattes of Wartburg Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa. It sounds as if it could have been written for today's Missouri:

The Church is at the crossroads in her inner relationships. Shall we present a united front to the world? Shall she know of only one doctrine, and shall she preserve the integrity of the Word? There is no question about the answer here. Neither is there any question about the fact that unnecessary divisions are not only a sin against the unity of the Church of the Word but that they are also one way in which men make themselves guilty of the sins of obstructing the work of the Church.

Where does the guilt rest, and who is responsible? We answer all those who have lost the vision of the *Una Sancta* and who place any human relationship above their fidelity to the Word and its integrity. It rests on the shoulders of those who are encased in the sectarianism of the Pharisee and on the shoulders of those who are dissolved into the sectarianism of Liberalism. Practically the latter are the greatest offenders, and it is they who are the great obstructionists today. When men prefer the company of errorists to that of the faithful, they have lost their sense of the value of their birthright.

Here it is that we challenge all the Lutherans of America . . . Mark you this: the chief obstructionists are the so-called "liberals," and those who are doing the most to destroy the unity of the Church are the unionists. On such the guilt for the sin of division must lie.

We are standing at the crossroads!

### Vagueness in Doctrinal Statements

The same issue of the *Concordia Theological Monthly* (February 1941) carries a quotation from the *Theological Forum* (Norwegian Lutheran Church) of October 1934:

One of the grave dangers that are threatening the Christian Church today is that many who profess to be its members no longer accept the Bible as God's inspired Word. Even among Lutherans strange sounds are sometimes heard regarding this subject.

There are some Lutheran theologians who find it rather difficult to declare unequivocally their exact position on the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Bible. To some of these it seems an unpleasant task to make their position clear, and often the distinction in sounds is such that it is impossible to say what has been piped or harped (1 Cor. 14:17).

\* \* \*

### Expanded Listings

Scriptural Anchor Publications, P.O. Box 263, Yuba City, California, 95991 sends along the news that because of recent demands it has expanded its publication list. Write it for its new listings, just released!

### Method . . . (Continued from Page 6)

combination method that combines radical literary criticism with their form or redaction criticism can only result in the surrender of the key doctrines of the Christian faith, as may be seen from reading the essays by Roman Catholic and Lutheran scholars in *A New Look at the Apostles' Creed*, edited by Gerhard Rein, published by the Lutheran Publishing House of Augsburg, in 1969.

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### Truth . . . (Continued from Page 5)

gether with Missouri and other Lutherans have held—until the St. Louis faculty began to reject this scriptural point of view, which, judging by their declarations now seemingly has become their "official" position.

Question: Will the New Orleans Convention resolve: *These two conflicting teachings and opposing theologies can now continue to exist side by side within our Missouri Synod as our revised, new, optionwise position?*

Is this now our "unbridgeable chasm," our "cross-roads" dilemma?

After 125 years, for all theological and practical purposes is our official public doctrinal stance on Scripture now and henceforth to be: "Thy Word is Truth"—and untruth, divine fact—and human fancy and fallacy, God's saving Truth—and man's destructive error?

Dr. Paul M. Freiburger, Pastor  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Billings  
Honorary President, Montana District

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"I believed,  
and therefore have  
I spoken"  
2 Cor. 4:13

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## Close The 'Sem'

JUL 10 1973

NO single part of the organized structure of Missouri has come under greater scrutiny since Milwaukee than the Seminary in St. Louis. The 65 pages of reports and resolutions dealing with just this one school, this small fragment of Missouri's world-wide and vast organization, is truly awesome.

Nothing like it has ever happened in our church before.

But few really seem to feel that the scrutiny has been overdone. Both liberals and conservatives know that the Sem is humanly speaking, the single most significant force in Missouri today. As the Seminary shapes our clergy to be the kind of orthodox clergy which marked Missouri's parishes in the past or to be part of a new breed of liberals, the Sem shapes our future as a church.

So the problem of the Seminary, people generally agree, has got to be settled. It's been with us too many years. It's much too important a problem to let drift. We need to solve it and solve it in a way which will please God and live up to the salvation Christ has won for us on the cross and live up to the magnificence of His resurrection.

The solutions proposed by Missourians rule the whole gamut of possibilities. Some ask for the resignation of the Seminary's president. Some want a sweeping resignation of the Sem's whole faculty. Some would let just the five faithful remain on the Sem's teaching staff. Some propose that the Board of Control resign, since it hasn't controlled the Sem, at least not in the way in which the great majority in Missouri would like to see the Seminary controlled. And some want to close down the Sem. Now. Totally. Perhaps for good. Perhaps for a few years.

NOTHING more vividly drives home the great sense of frustration among most of Missouri's people than these many pages of proposals. Nothing gives a reader as keen a sense of the intense desire of so many in Missouri faithfully to serve the Lord, faithfully to proclaim His Word, faithfully to train generations of church workers who will by grace transmit to their children's children the eternal and saving truths about the Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ and the victory of His suffering.

All these people want action. Most want it now.

*Affirm's* Editorial Group has discussed some of the options open to the church at New Orleans. It hopes that none of the more drastic ones will have to be exercised. It prays that even now those who lead the Seminary and those who have become identified with this liberal leadership may regret what they have done to the church and return to the historic convictions Missouri has held and still essentially holds.

It could happen; the power of God is not bound and, despite the Historical-Critical Method, miracles still do occur. The miracle of faith, for example.

But if that doesn't happen—what?

Dare conservatives temporize any longer in the hope conditions will begin to improve? Must they now take a firm and immutable stand to the effect that any man who no longer subscribes to the Lutheran faith as Missouri has traditionally understood it (and that's not as difficult to define as the liberals would try to make it seem in their effort to confuse the situation), no longer shall be allowed to teach in the Sem or any of our schools?

Because it so clearly states the issues, the traditional Missouri faith, and the errors which Missouri has historically opposed, may not the orthodox majority of Missouri make the *Statement* the real test? That would be no new approach in Missouri's history! In the past she has defined and rejected errors which have troubled her in just this fashion and with similar statements. That doesn't elevate the statements she used to the level of Confessions, but regards them as *ad hoc* documents utilized to clarify a troubling situation.

AND that's what we need to know now: who stands with the Article in Missouri's Constitution about her faith as defined according to the common understanding of Missourians historically and as now defined by the *Statement*.

Perhaps Missourians could make that same test of holding membership on the Board of Control of all our institutions.

Perhaps those on the Board and on the faculty who refuse to accept that test should be separated from Missouri—at least at this moment to the extent that they will no longer be permitted to help mold the minds of her future clergy in ways Missouri's majority finds wrong and repugnant.

And if these tests seem too difficult to administer, should the church consider what appear to be even more radical approaches? Has the time come to start with a new St. Louis Board of Control and a new faculty altogether? When you compare the Springfield faculty joining its Board of Control in accepting the *Statement* with the evident lack of clarity in the St. Louis Board of Control and the strong repudiation of the *Statement*, repeatedly made now by the St. Louis faculty, you can have little doubt where the St. Louis faculty stands and down what primrose path of theology it intends to take the church.

(Continued on Page 4)

## Support of 'Statement'

SINCE its release to the church on March 3rd, 1972, Dr. Preus' *Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* has enjoyed ever growing support from the membership of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. By the time the *Crossroads* letter was issued to the pastors of Synod at the first of this year it could be reported that the Statement had been "accepted by hundreds of pastors and congregations, by district conventions and other forums of the church, as expressing clearly the position of the Missouri Synod on issues which are crucial for our church today."

### 'Crossroads' Response

Our readers will recall that the *Crossroads* letter, signed by 34 concerned members of Synod (a representative group consisting of synodical, district, college and seminary officials; seminary professors, clergymen and laymen of the church) invited (communicant) members of the LC-MS to offer congregational and/or individual endorsement and support of the following proposal: that our people join with large numbers of their fellow-Lutherans in a synod-wide effort to

(1) stand behind the president in his endeavor to urge faithful adherence to the truth of God's Word in our church body; (2) declare our acceptance of *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* as a valid and necessary response to the issues which are troubling our church today; and (3) urge the president and all others in a position of doctrinal supervision to initiate whatever additional action may be necessary to maintain the preaching and teaching of God's Word in its truth and purity in our midst.

The response to the *Crossroads* invitation in the ensuing months has been remarkable. Whereas optimistic expectations had set the final number of endorsements at 200,000 to 250,000 by the time of the synodical convention, the quarter-million mark had already been surpassed by the middle of April. In this month of June the total is expected to exceed 300,000; endorsements continue to come in.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>A word concerning the method of computing and reporting the total number of *Crossroads* endorsements is in order. The *Crossroads* letter invited two types of endorsements, congregational and individual. In the case of a congregation's endorsement (given, for example, through a Voters' Assembly) the number of communicant members listed for that congregation in the 1971 LC-MS *Statistical Yearbook* is used to calculate the number of endorsements from that congregation. Individual endorsements are counted as signatures are received. Obvious duplicates are screened out (such as come into consideration when a congregation indicates a "corporate" endorsement and also sends in pages of signatures) so as not to get an inflated count on endorsements. No complete cross-check (by address, etc.) is made, since this would involve too much cost. There is the possibility that a small percentage of duplicates may be included in *Crossroads* endorsement total counts. Random checks have indicated such duplication is likely to be less than 2%. In order to be as accurate as possible—and even conservative—figures reporting *Crossroads* results are always reduced by 5% from the actual count of all endorsements.

SINCE it was learned that Dr. Preus himself had during the past year received many letters approving the issuance (and contents) of the *Statement* as well as related initiatives he had taken to help speed a solution of Synod's difficulties, *Affirm* learned the names of congregations which had sent him official resolutions endorsing his position. More than half the congregations that had sent Dr. Preus formal resolutions of support, it was determined, had not communicated with the *Crossroads* office regarding this action. The sum of the members of these congregations amounted to 91,760. This figure, *Affirm* feels, may legitimately be added to the number of endorsements *Crossroads* has received, and the total may be reckoned as the number of our people regarding whose endorsement of the *Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* reliable information has been received. That total, which in late May approached 400,000, represents approximately twenty percent of the communicant membership, and almost one thousand congregations, of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

A response from the constituency of Synod of this magnitude is extraordinary. Particularly so, when we recognize that no official machinery was instigated to promote a "vote" or in any way to "compel" a response.

When asked about the significance of the large, grassroots endorsement of the *Statement* in the light of Synod's history, the Director of the Concordia Historical Institute in St. Louis replied, in part: "I would guess there has never been such an extensive response tabulated . . . It certainly indicates widespread interest."

It was a specific purpose of the issuance of the *Crossroads* letter to help stimulate general interest in and study of the *Statement* within the synod. Great numbers of our pastors and people have found this document to be a clear, concise, excellent declaration of many genuinely Lutheran beliefs concerning the topics which it treats, especially the subject of the Holy Scriptures and their proper interpretation. They have appreciated its identification and repudiation, in simple language, of many modern liberal theological views which are antagonistic to the historic Lutheran conviction that the Bible in its entirety is the written Word of God, the absolutely true and authoritative norm for faith and life in the church.

SOME voices in our circles have, indeed, been raised against the *Statement*, as many of our readers may know. To date, however, only seventy individuals are on record in the *Crossroads* office as expressing opposition to the mailing of the letter or concerning the contents of the *Statement* it supports. No one in the church has yet produced a valid criticism of that document's assertions. The generally favorable acceptance of the *Statement* stems from a recognition that it presents the truth in the matters it treats. The synodical vice-presidents and many district presidents approved the document. Synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations, after consideration of the *Statement*, found its doctrinal content to be in accord with

# ALC Fellowship

TWO crucial issues face Missouri at its New Orleans Convention, issues that must be settled if we are to have any peace in Synod and retain our evangelical Lutheran identity. The first is the doctrinal controversy in our synod concerning the authority of the divine Word. The second is the continuing and compromising pulpit and altar fellowship existing between Missouri and the ALC. Both issues were very much alive before our Denver Convention four years ago. But they both surfaced and became much more prominent at that convention and soon after it.

The two issues are related in several ways. First, the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis which bears prime responsibility for starting the controversy over the authority of Scripture by the bold and open introduction and use of the Historical-Critical Method of interpreting Scripture was at the same time a most significant and effective force in promoting fellowship with the ALC. Second, neither our present controversy concerning the Word nor our declaration of fellowship with the ALC just happened by accident, nor were they the results of any discernable grass roots movement. Both were *imposed* upon Synod from the top. The crisis over Biblical authority was created by the St. Louis faculty and other elite scholars who were embarrassed and disgusted with Missouri's historic position on the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. Fellowship too was pushed and brought about by a powerful coalition of pre-Denver synodical administrators and, once again, the St. Louis Seminary faculty.

If the reader doubts this last assertion concerning the genesis of our declaration of fellowship with the ALC he just might recall how often key Seminary professors were used by the synodical administration in those days: 1) to meet with ALC representatives and discuss the fellowship issue at the top echelon, 2) to write the documents which ultimately became, for Missouri at least, the ostensible basis for a declaration of fellowship, and 3) to serve on floor committees at New York and Denver where the issue was pressed and finally won. And the reader might recall also the tremendous pressure put by President Harms on the Council of Presidents who played a large part in pushing for fellowship. In a progress report on LC-MS-ALC fellowship delivered September 11th, 1968, after arguing and cajoling on behalf of fellowship and scolding those who opposed it, President Harms made bold to say that it would be un-Lutheran not to declare fellowship, and he challenged those presidents who opposed the coming fellowship to "be prepared to relinquish their office." That was pressure, raw pressure. Not grass roots ground swell. I mention this to disabuse the reader from supposing that he is somehow fighting against his synod if today after four years he opposes fellowship with the ALC. And I mention it also to show the reader that our St. Louis faculty had and has a stake in retaining fellowship with the ALC. For our continuing fellowship with the ALC where the Historical-Critical Method is everywhere accepted and employed so as to undermine the authority of Scripture certainly tends in effect to validate and justify the same stance toward Scripture by a Missouri Synod faculty.

WITHOUT doubt the overriding issue facing Missouri and crying for decision in New Orleans is the doctrinal controversy in Synod over the authority of the Word. But this fact, recognized by most Missourians, gives neither justification nor reason for compromising or ignoring other grave issues concerning doctrine, conscience and deepest conviction.

And most pressing of these issues is our continuing fellowship relationship with the American Lutheran Church, *our continuing official recognition of that church body and its theology as genuinely Lutheran.*

The ALC came into being in 1961, a merger of several Lutheran synods of German, Norwegian and Danish background. With some of these synods Missouri had had no official contact. But such contact was soon made with the new church body. In 1967 at our New York Convention and on the basis of certain studies that a few representatives from both synods had done a floor committee recommended that fellowship be established between the two synods. Such a premature recommendation was defeated, but Synod was urged to continue discussions with the hope that a God-pleasing declaration of fellowship could be established at the Denver Convention.

Such discussions transpired on many levels. During these discussions definite roadblocks to a true declaration of fellowship became apparent. First there was the utter failure throughout the ALC to deal evangelically and effectively with lodge members in her communion. Second was the unionistic ecumenical involvement of the ALC whereby the truth of the Gospel as understood among Lutherans was compromised and false doctrine supported. Third and most important was an apparent deterioration of the *sola Scriptura* principle in the ALC. This was brought about by a categorical denial throughout the leadership and the schools of the ALC of Scripture's inerrancy as formerly understood among Lutherans and by the introduction and commitment to the Historical-Critical Method. But despite these barriers to true fellowship on the basis of full agreement in doctrine the Missouri Synod at Denver by a scant majority vote declared full pulpit and altar fellowship with the ALC. Prevailing differences between the synods were not totally overlooked. The presidents of both synods were asked to appoint representatives to iron out the doctrinal differences that still obtained.

AND so Missouri found herself in the anomalous position of affirming and rejoicing over what was thought to be an "existing unity of faith and confession" while at the same time continuing to discuss doctrinal differences which still obtained between the two church bodies.

Two years later after fellowship had been tried and practiced by many in Synod the entire matter was brought up for reconsideration at the Milwaukee Convention. Hundreds of congregations had found there was no doctrinal unity between the two synods on substantive issues, and many expressed themselves in memorials to the convention, asking that a fellowship that was premature and contrary to Scripture be terminated or at least suspended.

(Continued on Page 16)

## Support of 'Statement'...

(Continued from Page 2)

the Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and Missouri's doctrinal position. The Board of Control and the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary in Springfield did likewise. In corroboration of these judgments is the extensive documentation on which the *Statement* is based. This documentation—from the Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, LC-MS synodical statements and study documents, and LC-MS synodical resolutions—has been gathered together by Dr. Ralph A. Bohlmann, Executive Secretary of the CTCR, and is exhibited in his *Study Edition of A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* issued last fall.

### Convention Adoption

The *Statement* is one of the most useful publications to come before the church amidst the welter of materials issued in connection with the current doctrinal controversy in the synod. It could, indeed serve as an effective instrument for the settlement of the controverted issues and assist Synod in the "conservation and promotion of the unity of the true faith." (*Synodical Constitution*, Article III). This could happen, if the LC-MS in convention at New Orleans this July would formally adopt the *Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* as a "synodical statement"; insist that professors in all its colleges and seminaries subscribe to, and be controlled in their teaching by, the theses and antitheses of the *Statement* (the Missouri Synod, as a genuine church body has the right and duty to express itself in terms of its understanding of what Scriptures and our Confessions teach on the issues confronting the church today and to issue directives to professors of its schools); and recommend that all pastors and congregations of Synod accept and abide by the assertions of this document in their teaching and practice. *Affirm* recommends such convention action.

There is precedent in the history of the Lutheran Church for our synod's adoption and use of a document like the *Statement*, for the settlement of an internal doctrinal controversy. The second article in the March 1973 issue of *Affirm* relates in some detail how after the Reformation in Germany the Saxon Lutheran Church put an end to the so-called Crypto-Calvinistic aberration threatening its constituency by requiring subscription to the "Saxon Visitation Articles" on the part of all Lutheran pastors and professors. It informs us how in 1881 at Fort Wayne our own Missouri Synod convention's adoption of Dr. Walther's thirteen theses on election (characterized at that time as an expression of the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions) provided the solution to the Predestinarian Controversy in our church body.

SOME in synod today have expressed objection to the New Orleans Convention's acceptance of the *Statement* on the basis of a supposition that this would elevate it to the status of a new Lutheran Confession. Such would not be the case, however. Neither the "Saxon Visitation Articles" nor Walther's thirteen theses on election became new confessions. Like the latter documents the *Statement* offers assertions which are either the explicit or implicit teaching of the Scriptures and the Confessions; but its "principles" are expressed against the background of, and with particular reference to, contemporary scholarly and theological viewpoints which are in conflict with Biblical and Confessional instruction. The *Statement* simply gives answers from the Bible and the Lutheran Symbols to the issues controverted among us. These answers also harmonize with many resolutions and statements already adopted by past synodical conventions. The *Statement* may thus be thought of as a summary of public teaching of the synod concerning subjects treated in its pages.

There should be no hesitancy at New Orleans to accept the *Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* as a synodical document for the settlement of the present doctrinal controversy. Delegates will do well to vote its adoption and then direct all professors in the church's colleges and seminaries to subscribe to the *Statement* and be governed by its principles in their teaching, as well as recommend acceptance and use of the *Statement* to all of Synod's congregations. Such a convention accomplishment would be a great blessing of the Lord!

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Springfield, Illinois

## Close The 'Sem'...

(Continued from Page 1)

Can Missouri continue to temporize under circumstances like this?

And should even this approach, radical as it is, fail or appear to be heading toward failure, does Missouri have much choice left except to close down altogether the school which for a century and more has been its pride and joy?

We shudder at the thought.

We don't want to face it—quite naturally—because the Seminary for so long has held such a special place in the lives of Missourians. It has been one of their holy places.

It is wrapped in with memories of its past great: the Walthers and Piepers and Daus and Graebners and all the men so many of us have revered for so long.

We don't want to raise our hand against it and those memories. In our very bones we feel it is like raising our hands against our own fathers. For these men have been like our fathers; this Sem has been home to many of us.

Yet they are the dead. They are only memories. And perhaps the one way we can be loyal to them in their faithful witness to God is to close the very school at which they worked and which they loved perhaps even more than we.

Maybe we can do them and God no greater service than to call a halt to the kind of theologizing which has usurped what they once taught others and us. Maybe, were they here, they would urge us strongly that, when all else had failed, we take the most radical of all steps: close the Sem itself.

*Affirm* doesn't recommend this course to the New Orleans delegates or to its readers. It urges them all to watch events, to pray, to work toward some solution other than this most radical of all solutions.

But it does say that, as the Convention unfolds, all these options must be kept in mind, and if events make it clear that only the most radical of solutions will change the course of Missouri's history and bring her back to the old and tried ways, then the delegates must pray God for wisdom and strength to do what hitherto had been—amongst us all—the unthinkable: close the Sem, for our Lord's honor!

## In Your Hands

So you are a convention delegate, perhaps a layman, getting ready to pack your bags and leave for New Orleans. If you are a typical individual, you are a little frightened, quite apprehensive, and very confused. You have received a copy of the *Convention Workbook* and have thumbed through the 477 pages of reports and resolutions. Your pulse quickens as you realize that soon you will have to make decisions; before too long your vote will be one of those counted. How will you mark those ballots? When will you say yes and when no?

There may be a tendency to almost flip a coin as the days wear on and the arguments flow on endlessly. "After all," you might think, "what difference will one vote make—especially on this unimportant matter." Please don't ever feel that way, because you represent me and almost three million other members like me—and your vote may decide our ultimate fate as Lutherans.

There are no unimportant issues at this convention, because each in some way or other is tied to the one central issue. That is why New Orleans is so crucial, why the decisions made here will have a permanent effect on the future of Synod. The important difference between this convention and others in the recent past is that the issue has finally been defined. And it is not personalities, it is theology!

The question simply stated is this: Is the Bible the inspired Word of God, true in all parts—or is the Bible similar to any other history book, partially true and partially full of error, different only in that God inspires us when we read it? The first position is that which our synod has always upheld; the second is that adhered to by the majority of the faculty at the St. Louis Seminary and their supporters. The two positions are explained in the document of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations found on pages 435-448 of the *Convention Workbook*. Read the introductory page carefully, for it explains the problem. Then study the remaining pages, particularly the first and third columns. The third column explains the method of interpretation presently used by the Seminary majority. After completing this, turn to page 30 of the *Workbook* and there in the first column read the CTCR recommendation concerning the Historical-Critical Method.

EVERY vote you cast will reflect your position on this crucial issue. There can be no compromise, no fence straddling. Either the Bible is the Word of God, true in all its parts, or else it contains the Word of God, partially true and partially error-filled human history. How can you compromise? Do you want to say that the Bible is seventy-six percent true, or eighty-nine percent, or ninety-seven percent? Any form of concession, no matter how small, is a retreat from our historic beliefs and confessions.

This will be a point to consider when selecting the candidate for whom you will vote. You will hear talk of the evil of politics. Remember, there is nothing wrong with knowing the doctrinal position of the person for whom you are voting. How else can you vote intelligently? Politics is bad only when it becomes subversive, when false or derogatory information is published.

Also remember that there can be no such a thing as a compromise candidate, one who can heal the wounds and bring about

reconciliation. Permissivity will not bring peace. This struggle has been with us since the first professor started using the Historical-Critical Method at the St. Louis Seminary, and it will remain until one side or the other wins out. Compromise did not bring true peace to Vietnam. The Vietcong continue their systematic infiltration, and will probably some day take over the nation. The same is true within the Missouri Synod. Resolutions such as 3-185 (requesting Withholding Judgment re Seminary) and 3-186 (requesting Synod to Resist Taking Sides) are meaningless.

Yes, you will be asked to take a position. You will have to decide between such resolutions as 2-47 (To Authorize Ordination of Women to Pastoral Office) and 2-53 (To Reject Ordination of Women); 2-60 (To Urge That Synod Speak for the Unborn) and 2-65 (To Study Abortion); 2-140 (To Rescind Our Fellowship with ALC) and 2-144 (To Declare Fellowship with LCA); 3-24 (To Reaffirm Confessional Basis) and 3-26 (To Define Article II); 3-53 (Neither to Endorse Nor Reject Specific Methodologies) and 3-58 (To Reject Use of Historical-Critical Method); 3-93 (To Reinterpret Role of Board for Higher Education in Reappointments) and 3-95 (To Express Confidence in BHE); 3-111 (To Express Confidence in Professors and Board Members) and 3-118 (To Suspend Seminary Professors); 3-161 (To Request Resignation of Dr. John Tietjen) and 3-188 (To Seek Reconciliation Through Fraternal Discussion); 6-29 (To Endorse Present Procedures Used in Selection of Institutional Presidents) and 6-33 (To Amend Bylaws of Synod). You will have to take a stand on such matters as are brought up in 3-143 (To Replace St. Louis Board of Control), 3-151 (To Close Concordia Seminary, St. Louis), 3-163 (To Remove Dr. John H. Tietjen from Presidency of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis). Which way will you vote?

IT is one thing to read through the *Workbook* and make up your mind now; it will be quite another when the emotional speeches are being made in convention hall. Suddenly you will realize that people are involved. That will be the time to remember to vote your conscience, not your emotions. Listen carefully to what is being said. Don't forget, words are like the labels on bottles. What is important is the content, not the label (See "Bottle Game," *Affirm*, May, 1973). Three men can each state that they accept the Scriptures as the written Word of God, and yet each mean something completely different. Do not be afraid to ask for definitions.

One final word of advice. You will hear much talk about the centrality of the Gospel, about Gospel freedom. The implication usually is that the rest of the Bible is unimportant, and individuals are free to teach anything they like. You may also hear it said that some within Synod feel that the Gospel is not enough, that we must also believe in an inerrant Bible to be saved, or that we believe the Gospel only because we first believe the Bible is without error.

No one I know denies that the Gospel is the center or heart of God's Word. No one I know denies that we believe in Jesus Christ

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# Workbook Issues

## *The Historical-Critical Method*

Delegates to the New Orleans Convention must be prepared to make a decision on the interpretation of the Bible.

Shall we continue with the method we used for over 100 years, the Grammatical-Historical Method, which begins with the Bible as the very Word of God, a Word inspired and inerrant, a Word which must interpret itself, a Word to be taken literally unless that Word itself suggests otherwise?

Or do we go with the Historical-Critical Method which views the Bible as subject to the rules governing any other purely human historical document, a method which says an incident in Jesus' ministry has been added to both by the early church and by the Gospel writer himself and that thus we today must peel this back like an onion to get at the original germ of "truth," a peeling-back process which is subject to the whims of the individual peeler?

The choice cannot be evaded nor can it be postponed. Too many of our professors (and the pastors and teachers they have trained) already hold to the Historical-Critical Method.

At a recent District pastoral conference two Seminary professors were essayists. Although holding that man is sinful, they seemed strangely unwilling to connect our sinfulness to Adam. This despite the reading from the floor by pastors of almost endless quotations from the Bible and the Confessions speaking of our guilt as related to Adam's sin. The next day the reason for this reluctance by the essayists became clear. Confronted by a direct question, they refused to say that Adam and Eve were truly historical persons. Obviously, we cannot have any connection with a non-existent Adam!

Why get rid of Adam and Eve? Because these professors, devotees of the Historical-Critical Method, do not accept Genesis 1 to 3 as straight history, but rather as a sort of "parable" of man's origin. God's grand creative word, "Let there be!" is gone in favor of "somehow, we know not how, it all came to be."

Synod's top doctrinal Commission (Commission on Theology and Church Relations) has long been occupied with a study of various approaches to Biblical interpretation. The result of this study on Synod's behalf is in the *Workbook*, pp. 435-448. This is required reading for every delegate. The *column method of showing how the Grammatical-Historical Method differs from the Historical-Critical Method (both radical and moderate) is superb.*

Having completed those 13 pages, the delegate will turn to the CTCR's report (pp. 29-45), especially to the "Historical-Critical Method" (pp. 29-30) and still more especially to the CTCR's own four recommendations to the Convention, bottom of first column, page 30.

If a delegate did nothing more than vote in favor of this four-fold recommendation, his trip to New Orleans would be a worthwhile contribution to Synod's future.

If the New Orleans Convention—a watershed in many areas—is to stem and turn back the creeping tide of liberalism which has been at least 10 years a-making, it must begin with a solid declaration regarding our view of the Bible and how we are to go about interpreting it.

## *Commission on Mission and Ministry*

Tightening up of administration and elimination of overlapping boards, committees, and commissions is an on-going task of any church body, as it is indeed of any corporation.

Three New Orleans Overtures (4-37 through 4-39C, p. 196) call for dissolving the Commission on Mission and Ministry. We see no overture which asks for its continuance.

The Commission's original assignment (Cf. Milwaukee 5-22) was to think about "training Christian workers for the various and special ministries as dictated by the needs of mankind." It did so and its report was accepted at Milwaukee. It was urged to "prepare its final report." From within the Commission itself came the stated feeling that its work was done.

Any further activity of the Commission on Mission and Ministry would simply overlap and duplicate the work of other commissions and boards. It has virtually no assignments. It has a salaried staff equal to that of the large Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR).

Administrative responsibility as well as the good stewardship of available funds dictate that New Orleans concur in dissolving this Commission which was formed for a specific purpose, did its job, and has now completed its task.

## *Doctrinal Discipline*

In the last decade Synod has experienced a definite drift away from its solid doctrinal stand on the objective and verbal inspiration of the Bible. Its fruit is an increasing doctrinal permissiveness and a lack of doctrinal discipline.

Dr. Horace Hummel (*Occasional Papers*, p. 30) comments, "If everyone simply toots his own horn, subjective religious experience has plainly already replaced confessionalism and the objective authority of the Bible."

The "gold book" has nine overtures (pp. 56-58) that bear on doctrinal discipline. Some people like the direction we have been going and voice a plea "to permit varying opinions." They openly favor everyone tooting his own theological horn. Others want the synodical symphony to play in harmony and therefore call for "strict doctrinal discipline."

Other matters may have more proposed resolutions, but *no area of decision at New Orleans is more important than that of doctrinal discipline.* This means a church body's right and responsibility to say of its doctrinal platform, "This we believe, this we insist be preached from our pulpits, this we require our professors to teach." It means saying that he who believes and teaches otherwise is not one of us and that *our integrity, as well as his, requires that he go elsewhere.*

Make no mistake about it, progress—and even survival—in literally every area of Synod's work depends on this. From Sunday school literature to membership growth, from what is taught at our colleges and seminaries to the quality of graduates we put into our schools and pulpits, from the function of the Council of Presidents to home and foreign missions.

Ultimately, doctrinal discipline is what it's all about.

(Continued on Page 21)



# Faithful Confession With Doctrinal Review

THE *Handbook* of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod treats the topic of "doctrinal review" on pages 199-202 (see also By-Laws 11.25 h; 11.53 b; 11.89).

Doctrinal review is not censorship. It is not intended to homogenize the witnessing of our pastors, teachers, and lay persons concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, nor concerning His Good News, nor of His Church which is the people of God.

Doctrinal review is rooted in Christian accountability for every word spoken or written. Such discipline is a mark of Christian discipleship. Therefore, we must stress the positive aspects of doctrinal review as they are also set forth by implication in the Articles of Incorporation (*Handbook*, p. 11f.) as well as in the Constitution of Synod (*Handbook*, p. 15-17). A discussion of doctrinal review ought to begin here.

The essential concern of Synod's history has been the *confession and proclamation* of pure doctrine drawn from the Scriptures and attested by our Lutheran Confessions. That makes men wise unto salvation. All the doctrinal resolutions of Synod re-enforce this over-riding interest for which our synod exists. For example, see Article III, 1 of the Constitution: "The objects of Synod are the conservation and promotion of the unity of the true faith (Eph. 4:3-6; I Cor. 1:10) and a united defense against schism and sectarianism."

Note that the above rejects humanistic or pelagian assumptions regarding the liberty of the Christian to do his own thing in the church as his *Zeitgeist* moves him. Synod exists because the founding fathers and their successors believed that Christian unity is rooted in the means of grace by the operation of the Holy Spirit, and that it results in the "obedience to the Gospel" or to the Word of God. Such unity is broken when not all Christians speak or confess "the same thing."

ACCORDINGLY, doctrinal review has no other purpose than to offer re-enforcement of the purposes of Synod as they are executed particularly in the publications of Synod, whatever the media. Synod assigns the "supervision of doctrine taught in the Synod" to the President of the Synod (By-Law 2.27, *Handbook*, p. 46). The By-Laws concerning doctrinal review (11.155 and 11.161, *Handbook*, p. 200f.) recognize this fact in upholding the appointive responsibilities of the Synodical President.

Doctrinal review is acceptable only when doctrinal consensus (Augsburg Confession VII) already exists. The exercise of such doctrinal discipline will be opposed in any church group which does not possess "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). Until the last decade, our synod accepted doctrinal review as a normal Christian discipline arising from its attention to doctrine. Only lately, during the past twenty years, opposition to doctrinal review has grown as an expression of hostility to "sound doctrine," both within the seminary as well as in the liberal element of Synod.

But we are a confessing church body. Synod is neither a debating society nor a socio-political movement seeking the attainment of man's goals. The articles of faith which we have undertaken to confess before the world and to each other are beyond debate and argument. By definition of our Synodical Constitution (Article III,1) there can be no inoffensive or innocent debate regarding the public or confessional teaching of our Lutheran church as our synod has repeatedly affirmed them by many resolutions. It has interpreted some of its individual points of doctrine and rejected by formal resolutions such teachings which were recognized as deviations from the truth confessed among us.

THUS we have shown the constitutional sources for doctrinal review, which are based upon our Lutheran understanding of confessional doctrine. We have pointed to the responsibility of the Synodical President, who appoints all reviewers, for doctrinal supervision also of our publications or media products, and to the relationship of the process of doctrinal review to doctrinal confession and proclamation on all levels of our synodical witness.

Whereas the faculty of the St. Louis Seminary formerly assumed responsibility for the doctrinal review of all publications sponsored by Synod, now the President of Synod appoints reviewers for "each board, commission, and other subordinate groups of the Synod" (By-Law 11.155) after receiving their advice regarding the number and the desired competency of doctrinal reviewers needed. Each group may also suggest a list of qualified persons.

The first comment to be made is the observation that *this procedure results in the partial control of the review process by the Synodical agencies subject to review.*

After the Milwaukee Convention, the President of Synod appointed more than 270 reviewers to meet the stipulations of By-Law 11.155. Each Board, Commission, and other subordinate groups of Synod determined the number of its reviewers. That provision permitted the personnel of an agency or the staff of a board or commission to pick and choose among the reviewers assigned to it when doubtful manuscripts were submitted for review. By doing so, it is possible for an agency staff to control the doctrinal review structure to suit its own policies and partisan objectives.

This has important implications. One could be stated thus: *The range of selection of reviewers available to the agencies subject to doctrinal review seriously vitiates the possibility of subjective and coherent evaluations of the work offered for publication.*

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# False Doctrine Through 'The Back Door'

READING the report of the Board of Social Ministry and World Relief in the 1973 *Convention Workbook* is an interesting exercise. One can scarcely doubt the fine motives and exemplary goals of the persons involved in this work and the writing of this report. And, more than ninety percent of the sentences and paragraphs in their report will have complete endorsement by the massive orthodox majority of Synod. For an orthodox, Bible-believing Missouri Lutheran will have no misgivings about showing love and contributing good works to the poor, the helpless, the sick, and the needy.

It is the less than ten percent of the sentences and paragraphs in which we find "social gospel" has replaced or has been put on par with the Saving Gospel.

These words buried in the Report of the Commission on Social Concerns are the key to the problem:

Neither the Scriptures nor our Confessions dichotomize between the witness of the Word and Sacrament on the one hand, and the witness of the deed on the other. To define the mission of the church otherwise places the work of social ministry in a *secondary order of importance and substantially undercuts support of the social ministry of the church.* (emphasis added).

Wherever we see this equating of works with Grace, we can easily and accurately predict the consequences. Even the liberals (read NCC executive Rev. Dean M. Kelley's book *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing*) are now convinced that stewardship, membership, and attendance all go downhill when denominations do not have strong doctrinal integrity and when they begin to take corporate positions and make corporate pronouncements in secular affairs.

AS a matter of plain, unadulterated fact, Scriptures and our Confessions *do* dichotomize between the Saving ministry and social ministry. Turn to chapter 13 of Matthew and read the last verse. Can it be any clearer? Here Jesus was in His own home country; people were in need of feeding and healing; and yet we read:

And He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

When this first mistake is made (of equating social ministry with the Saving ministry) other mistakes follow. Let's look at one of them:

We see no reason why this nation cannot eliminate hunger almost at once between its borders. Every person below the poverty line should be *guaranteed* the means to an adequate diet, either by direct food assistance, or better, by *guaranteed* employment and *guaranteed* adequate incomes. (emphasis added)

Can we find any clear passages in Scriptures that would make the above paragraph a valid guide to the church? We'd surely have to discard the words of Jesus as He told us the poor will always be with us. And many Christians believe that guaranteed income brings a guaranteed poverty (of spirit) that is worse than the poverty it is designed to erase.

THE above—and other—extracts from reports on Social Ministry will suffice to establish the "back door influx" of false doctrine. It is false—since the very foundation (of equating social ministry with the Saving ministry) has no support in Scriptures. Quite the opposite is true. The main mission of the church is to preach the (Saving) Gospel; all other functions are secondary. When the main mission is better accomplished, there will be better works and less poverty.

Social ministry, of course, had its place in the church. If it is placed under rather than equal to or over the main mission which Christ gave to His church, it will flourish. If it promotes individual charity, if it sponsors group programs which are within the walls of its own denomination, and if it holds its corporate positions on secular matters only to those clearly and unequivocally spelled out in Scriptures, the social ministry will thrive. But as soon as it insists on promoting secular positions, joining bodies and making pronouncements which are "open to debate," the Department of Social Ministry impedes rather than supplements the main mission of the church. We must reject such rationale as this excerpt from the Report of Commission on World Hunger:

The question of *how* the U. S. can assist rather than resist development in the poor countries necessarily leads to economic and political issues that are open to debate. But the church cannot use that as an excuse for avoiding these issues. Avoiding them is also taking a stand—for the status quo, for the increase of hunger.

The church *must* learn to avoid taking positions on debatable matters. These matters are not the business of the church. If the church would concentrate better on its business, there would be more Christians.

THESE Christians become the salt and the leaven in the world. As they go about their work—as business leaders, union leaders, military men, pacifists, policemen, teachers, artists, plumbers, physicians, politicians, scientists, farmers, etc., etc.,—they will help in a myriad of ways to bring about the aims of those advocating social ministry. They will frequently err and many times be in opposition to each other. But they will, collectively, carry out the good works that Scriptures make plain as being the results of faith.

What should be the social ministry of the church? Overture 9-04 (from the English District) would have it be "To Lobby for the Hungry." The California-Nevada District offers 9-22A, "To Grant Amnesty." The Board of Social Ministry and World Relief in 9-28 wants to "enlist where possible and in keeping with the adopted policies of the church, national, state, and municipal services; maintain liaison with the Division of Welfare Services of LCUSA as well as other religious or secular agencies . . ." and promote "liaison with other groups such as Church World Service, as well as governmental agencies which are involved with the underdeveloped nations of the world . . ."

All of these will, however well intentioned, be digging LCUSA deeper into the social gospel. Perhaps the fastest way to stop this false doctrine coming in the back door would be to adopt 9-24, "To Withdraw Social Ministry Affirmations" and 9-25, "To Withdraw Corporate Positions in Secular Affairs."

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# Mission Affirmations: Inadequate, Inappropriate

THE Minority Report for the Board for Missions in the New Orleans Convention Workbook speaks in glowing terms about the Mission Affirmations, and one gets the impression that they supersede the Constitution and Bylaws of Synod. On the other hand, the Board Report on Issues first commends the Affirmations for "various important Biblical emphases" which "rightly and eloquently show a deep compassion for men in their spiritual and physical condition," but also says "it appears that at times they have been regarded as sanctioning many types of mission and ecumenical policies which are beyond the Scriptures, the Confessions, and other Synodical Resolutions which clarify such matters" (Page 11, 1973 Convention Workbook).

The Board Report states: "We believe that the Affirmations lack clarity and are ambiguous at certain points and have allowed for some confusion in Mission doctrine and practice. They seem to lack a proper emphasis on the Word of God as the source and norm of the Mission, on the necessity of faith through which salvation is obtained (subjective justification), on the recognition of the Visible and Invisible Church (and the reality of differences between denominations), on the political involvement by the churches as an institution (no clear distinction between the two kingdoms), the use of Law and Gospel in missions, the hostility of the sinful world against the faithful Church, the proper balance between Gospel proclamation and social involvement, the eschatological aspect of missions (Matthew 24:14), and on the ultimate goal of eternal life. The Mission Affirmations are somewhat inappropriate because they do not address themselves to some of the major issues of mission concerns in any age: problems of humanism, universalism, synergism, ecumenism, the so-called 'anonymous Christian', and revolution liberation theology."

The Board majority suggested a need for sensitivity toward "the doctrine of the two kingdoms, recognizing that our mission is unique and different from any secular group or government. It is directed toward putting man's existence under Christ's Saviorship and Lordship through faith by the Holy Spirit. We seek to avoid secularization of the Church. To present missions only as a form of Christian compassion for the underprivileged is a distortion. Nor is the Church an agent of social revolution. Yet the Church stands against sin, injustice, bigotry, prejudice, and it seeks to correct the human nature which produces human problems. The Church, as an institution, should not take a political stand, but do its work through its individual members who witness and influence, working individually and corporately through all levels of government."

WHAT is the inadequacy of the Mission Affirmations? Although the Board minority speaks in glowing terms about them, there certainly is a need to correct their deficiencies at a number of basic points.

1-01A\* refers to "redeeming the world" and "reconciling all things," but it does not effectively treat the fact of subjective justification, as the Board majority points out. While it refers to the Holy Spirit, not one word is said about the Word of God through which the Spirit alone works. It tells of the missionary dimensions of worship, service, fellowship and nurture, but no word is stated about the fact that all men are sinners, that sin has produced death and damnation and enslavement to the Devil, and that only those who repent and believe will be reconciled to God and be saved from sin now and for eternity.

1-01B\* though quoting John 3:16, it refers to a "universal redemption," and approaching men of other faiths, which is subject to misunderstanding for it would certainly allow universalism. Rightfully, we are told, that sister mission churches in other lands are not subservient to us, but to the Lord, but it does not tell us what this partnership with these churches really means.

1-01C\* confuses the matter of confessionality as it emphasizes the church as a confessional movement and de-emphasizes the matter of institutional barriers or separation. Certainly, the Lutheran Confessions do both—they confess and they also protest, and in their protest they make us a separate and distinctive denomination. One of the great weaknesses of this Affirmation is that it does not address itself or define "the Visible and the Invisible Church," and the reality of differences between denominations. A theologically liberal person can affirm this Affirmation. This section ought to define the true marks of the church in its mission to itself and to other churches.

1-01D\* is confusing when it says that there is no area of life which may be termed "secular" in the sense that it is removed from the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The fact is that there are secular aspects of life, which are under the control of the Devil, and need to be given over to the Lordship of Christ. The statement that we recognize the difficulty of understanding in every instance whether God desires Christians to act corporately or individually or both in His mission to the whole society is a totally inadequate way to get at the point itself. Scriptural and Lutheran principles should be spelled out at this point in order to get ourselves out of the confusion and misunderstanding in which we find ourselves today in the matter of individual or corporate action in the world. This section confuses the question of the relationship of the Church to society, seeming to maintain that the Church is to redeem society. There's no question that the Church should influence society as its individual members participate in everyday life. But this does not suggest that the institutional church should be involved in the politics of government. The Affirmations do not even imply that it is a hostile world and that the world will practice hostility against the faithful Church. This section should also concern itself with the reality of the "social Gospel," while it stresses the importance of ministering to the physical and social needs of man.

1-01E\* is unsatisfactory because of the lack of clarity of three words: church, missions, and whole man. Christ conferred on His Church the mission to seek and save the lost by proclaiming the saving Gospel and infallible Word. The Affirmations should make clear that no man is whole until he has faith in Jesus, as Jesus said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." This Affirmation is also erroneous when it states that the demonstration of our faith in Christ "adds power to its proclamation" for the power comes alone from God's Word and the Holy Spirit, not from us.

1-01F\* is as weak as the other points, as it deplores anything that seeks to divide what God has joined together, such as racism, multiplication of sects, wars, etc., but it does not intimate anything about false doctrine, and as the Board's majority tells of the danger of universalism, syncretism, and a new humanism of our day.

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# Mission Affirmations: Inadequate, Inappropriate

THE Minority Report for the Board for Missions in the New Orleans *Convention Workbook* speaks in glowing terms about the Mission Affirmations, and one gets the impression that they supersede the Constitution and Bylaws of Synod. On the other hand, the Board Report on Issues first commends the Affirmations for "various important Biblical emphases" which "rightly and eloquently show a deep compassion for men in their spiritual and physical condition," but also says "it appears that at times they have been regarded as sanctioning many types of mission and ecumenical policies which are beyond the Scriptures, the Confessions, and other Synodical Resolutions which clarify such matters" (Page 11, 1973 *Convention Workbook*).

The Board Report states: "We believe that the Affirmations lack clarity and are ambiguous at certain points and have allowed for some confusion in Mission doctrine and practice. They seem to lack a proper emphasis on the Word of God as the source and norm of the Mission, on the necessity of faith through which salvation is obtained (subjective justification), on the recognition of the Visible and Invisible Church (and the reality of differences between denominations), on the political involvement by the churches as an institution (no clear distinction between the two kingdoms), the use of Law and Gospel in missions, the hostility of the sinful world against the faithful Church, the proper balance between Gospel proclamation and social involvement, the eschatological aspect of missions (Matthew 24:14), and on the ultimate goal of eternal life. The Mission Affirmations are somewhat inappropriate because they do not address themselves to some of the major issues of mission concerns in any age: problems of humanism, universalism, synergism, ecumenism, the so-called 'anonymous Christian', and revolution liberation theology."

The Board majority suggested a need for sensitivity toward "the doctrine of the two kingdoms, recognizing that our mission is unique and different from any secular group or government. It is directed toward putting man's existence under Christ's Saviorship and Lordship through faith by the Holy Spirit. We seek to avoid secularization of the Church. To present missions only as a form of Christian compassion for the underprivileged is a distortion. Nor is the Church an agent of social revolution. Yet the Church stands against sin, injustice, bigotry, prejudice, and it seeks to correct the human nature which produces human problems. The Church, as an institution, should not take a political stand, but do its work through its individual members who witness and influence, working individually and corporately through all levels of government."

WHAT is the inadequacy of the Mission Affirmations? Although the Board minority speaks in glowing terms about them, there certainly is a need to correct their deficiencies at a number of basic points.

1-01A\* refers to "redeeming the world" and "reconciling all things," but it does not effectively treat the fact of subjective justification, as the Board majority points out. While it refers to the Holy Spirit, not one word is said about the Word of God through which the Spirit alone works. It tells of the missionary dimensions of worship, service, fellowship and nurture, but not one word is stated about the fact that all men are sinners, that sin has produced death and damnation and enslavement to the Devil, and that only those who repent and believe will be reconciled to God and be saved from sin now and for eternity.

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# Collegiality Equals Paralysis

SOME are calling for the reduction of the power of Synod's president and for giving that power to the Council of District Presidents (cf., Memorials 5-62 to 5-71 to the New Orleans Convention). Many think this a power play on the part of the liberal establishment within Synod and could lead only to administrative paralysis in Synod. Let me show you how.

## *An Old Saw*

The use of the euphemism, "collegiality," shouldn't fool anyone into believing that this is a new proposal. It is nothing new at all. It is an old saw within Synod. This proposal has been made time and again in our history in one form or another and has always been rejected because it is a totally inadequate form or administrative procedure. It is still inadequate today.

## *Popular Today?*

Although the concept might appear to be more popular today, in this age of appeals for pluralism, participatory democracy and minority representations; it is still today, as in the past, an inadequate and unworkable administrative theory. We can consider ourselves fortunate that Synod has recognized its deficiencies in the past and we must surely not legislate such confusion and paralysis upon Synod now. The wisdom of our fathers demonstrates itself in this matter too.

## *Not A Federation of Districts*

From the very beginning of Synod, our church has always affirmed that Synod is not a federation of districts but that the district officers are to be merely the arms or extension of the office of the president of Synod. Administratively they are in a "line" relationship to the synodical president, to administer the affairs of Synod within their respective districts under the supervision and control of the chief executive officer of the church, Synod's president. That is the theory on which Synod was founded and she has rejected every previous attempt to change that polity, or every challenge to that theory, in past years. Collegiality is trying to invert that theory now.

## *For Instance*

At one time Synod tried to elect regional vice presidents; that is, she elected her vice presidents on a regional basis, so that all regions of Synod would be represented on the Praesidium. But that was soon found to be impractical and unworkable and was rejected after a brief experiment. Again, about 25 years ago, it was proposed that the Council of Presidents should take votes on synodical issues. Because the liberals were in a minority on the Council at that time, they opposed such a proposal then. What, suddenly, has changed the liberal mind now? And why was such a position not proposed when the liberals were able to control the presidency? They weren't interested in and didn't want collegiality then. Why the sudden change now?

## *A Political Football*

If such a proposal were enacted, it would really make a political football out of Synod's administrative branch of govern-

ment. The district presidents are politically oriented—by the nature of their office; and to give them this kind of decision-making authority would really politicize the church. As one of the District Presidents said recently, the Council of Presidents is one of the most politically divided and "one of the most divisive groups within the synod." They can't agree on a thing. And this is the kind of chaos they now want to impose on the synodical administration and upon the whole church? God forbid!

## *Where Are the Laymen?*

And where are the laymen in this proposal? What the liberals are actually calling for is another branch of government, i.e. a House of Bishops, which is exclusively clerical. This would be like establishing still another deliberative body in our national government structure, made up of the governors of all the states of the Union. Can you imagine how ineffective such a structure would be for our national government? It would create even more chaos in the church.

And it would also destroy the balance of representation between clergy and laymen that our Constitution calls for. The laymen have no representation in the Council of Presidents. If we were to elevate that body to a decision-making or administrative function for the whole church, then the balance of lay participation would be drastically reduced and ours would become a clericalized church. I don't think the laymen would want that to happen. Or, if the Council of Presidents were to be elevated to that kind of authority, then a layman from each district should also be elected to sit on that Council and have equal authority with the district president. And I am sure the District Presidents don't want that.

## *Elected by Synod*

And finally, if they want to serve the whole church or administer the affairs of the whole church (instead of only within their districts), then they ought to be elected by the whole church, as is suggested by Memorials 5-78 to 79. If they are to have administrative powers for the whole synod and not only their individual districts, then they should be responsible to and accountable to the whole church by a requirement that they be elected by the whole electorate, at synodical conventions, rather than by the constituents in their own districts alone. I am sure that none of the liberal District Presidents would want that; because, since they are a minority in Synod, that would assure them that they would not be reelected.

No, this proposal for collegiality, or for a House of Bishops, is: 1. Contrary to the theory of government that Synod has adopted; 2. Impractical and unworkable; and 3. Could only lead to chaos or paralysis of the church and would immobilize Synod on all significant issues. It should therefore be rejected.

The Rev. Marcus T. Lang  
Pastor, St. James Lutheran Church  
Lafayette, Indiana

# What The Historical-Critical Method Means

## From a Laywoman . . .

In the *Detroit News* of Saturday, October 14th, 1972, Dr. Ehlen was quoted as saying, "The laymen (of the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church) really don't know too much about what is going on and probably a lot of them don't care.

As a laywoman of this Lutheran church, I would like to comment on this statement. Our Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has always taken the stand that "God's Word cannot err," and we believe, teach and confess that since the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, they contain no errors or contradictions, but they are in all parts and words the infallible truth.

Our laymen have been taught this from childhood and in confirmation class, and in faith believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who died for our sins and rose again for our salvation. This Gospel message is based on the inspired message as related in the Bible.

Our laymen have always had confidence in the clergy of our church that they will not deviate from the Lutheran Confessions as based on the Holy Scripture, so it has never been necessary for the laymen to question or worry about the teachings in our Seminaries. Our clergy take an oath at their ordination that they will remain true to the Lutheran Confessions based on the Bible as the inspired Word of God.

Now it has come to light that many of our clergy are teaching a unique brand of Bible interpretation. They are using human reason, and treating the Bible as subject to human scholarship and wisdom. To the outside world this may be called a political struggle; but in reality it is a struggle for the Word of God in its purity, with the Gospel of Christ as revealed in Scripture proclaimed boldly and faithfully.

I would like to ask this question of our clergy. What are we to teach our young children? When are children ready for this new Bible interpretation? Is their faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ going to be strong until their death when certain areas are left open for question? Can we teach them one thing when they are young to establish their faith, and then, when they are older, permit them to question many parts of the Bible? The Bible is not to be treated like a fairy tale.

I wish to openly ask our clergy to examine their own conscience and take their stand according to the Word of God as revealed in the Bible. We as laymen depend on this from our clergy, professors and teachers. If they fail to uphold our faith in Jesus Christ as we have been taught from the inspired Word of God, then we indeed need a reformation in our Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Our laymen do care; we care for the sake of our children to the third and fourth generation, and forever.

Ruth Sheldon  
Detroit, Michigan

## From a Campus Pastor . . .

Pastor, there is no such thing as conservative or liberal when it comes to the Bible; you either believe it or you don't.

This statement was made to this campus pastor about the contemporary theological troubles in our synod. It was made by a university student who is newly alive by faith in Jesus. He and others like him are aggressively engaged in evangelizing our campus. Such young people are very pleased when they find ministries that are uncompromisingly committed to Jesus and His Holy Word. They are intelligent enough to see through sanctimonious drivel. They will not "buy" rationalistic attempts at explaining away the miraculous in the Bible. They can see, for example, that unless there was a real man, Adam, who fell into sin from a state of perfection then the doctrine of original sin is mere speculation.

Why do this fellow and his friends feel the way they do? Well, some of them have grown-up thinking that being a Christian is identical with being a good Boy Scout. They may have been told by ministers, who were embarrassed by the dogma and the miracles of the Bible, to forget about all the "unbelievable" things in the Bible. They may have been advised to just be truly human and live life as it comes. However, they may have learned the hard way, via booze, drugs, promiscuity, and nihilistic philosophies, that life without the God of the Bible is a dead-end street.

On today's college campus the student is taught an approach to knowing which is secular and materialistic. The presuppositions of such an approach include the doctrines that we live in a closed universe, i.e., closed to outside intervention, and that every event must have a naturalistic explanation. Hence, the supernatural and the miraculous are excluded out-of-hand. Such an approach to knowing leads to the conclusion that there is no such thing as an absolute standard of right and wrong. Past standards have only been devised by men. It is taught, or at least inferred, that the Bible is merely a product of the times in which it was written. The theory of evolution is used to explain the history of man and his world. And this theory gives its believer some vague hope that the future will be better than the past.

The student who accepts all this and more will think of himself as no more than a smart animal. Without an absolute standard of morals, he will want to "do his own thing" and will feel that he is right so long as no one gets hurt, and/or he feels "good" after he has done so. He may figure that since all humans have a sex drive that we need not accept the old-fashioned inhibiting idea that intercourse is only for the married. He will seek out a "liberated chick" and with the pill they can "make love, not war" without fear. Should a so-called accident occur, then his consort should be free to "get rid of it" via abortion. Beside ex-

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## The Cato Mentality

MARCUS Porcius Cato, soldier, statesman, man of letters at Rome, second century before Christ, had one consuming passion later in life, a real blind spot: the total destruction of Rome's arch rival on the African side of the Mediterranean, Carthage. *Carthago delenda est*, "Carthage must be destroyed," was the way he ended every speech; and Latin students ever since have had to learn the words by heart, for the sake of the gerundive form. History, as a matter of fact, questions whether Cato was right in his ruthless obsession.

The "Cato mentality" has caught hold of Missouri, infecting especially, it would seem, the so-called "moderate" camp, but a lot of others, too, who call for the destruction or end of "Old Missouri."

What's going on? Why this consuming passion to destroy? is what a lot of puzzled bystanders are asking.

Fifty years ago, at Missouri's 75th anniversary, a commemorative book appeared under the title *Ebenezer*, edited by Dr. W.H.T. Dau. Partly history, partly vignettes of men and events, it told the blessings showered by God upon Missouri: Word and Sacrament faithfully preached and administered; unity of faith, purity of teaching and doctrine; congregations, schools, missions founded throughout the world. Controversies, too, were part of the story, sad though these were. There was no vain boasting. As a matter of fact, says Dr. Dau in the concluding chapter, "it would be quite easy to turn our rejoicing into mourning by dwelling at length on the shady side of our past record."

Our fathers were honest with themselves and with the church. They well knew how short they came in taking the faithful Lord at His Word and how they had failed Him. Yet this was no signal for crying: "Missouri delenda est!" Instead this is how they evaluated things and made their resolves for the future:

Her (the Lutheran Church) periods of weakness have always been those when her children made light of their confessional heritage and were bartering away their birthright in the Lord's family for a pot of lentils.

The mind that can yield to an equivocal peace by which plain truth is sacrificed is not truly liberal, but fatally narrow and bigoted because it exhibits all its generous qualities only to the side which opposes truth.

Let us no longer make the attempt "to agree to disagree," but honestly ask for the old paths, diligently study "the faith once delivered to the saints," so that we may diligently and "earnestly contend for it."

DR. Dau touched the neuralgic points exactly fifty years ago already! Let's grant that, if anything, we have more reason today than half a century ago for mourning over "the shady side of our past record." That still wouldn't justify Missouri's debunkers calling for her destruction. It's a Cato mentality which seeks to:

make light of her Confessional heritage;

denigrate her great leaders;  
yield to an equivocal peace in the name of a new "moderate" stance which sacrifices the truth for the sake of joining the ecumenical mainstream of diluted denominationalism;  
agree to disagree, by allowing differing theologies (and doctrine) to exist side by side, giving error equal place with Scriptural truth;  
surrender the authoritative Word of God, Holy Scripture, as the one and only standard by which all teachings and teachers in the church are to be judged;  
speak with forked tongue when it claims subscription to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, and yet labels the "old paths" to which Dr. Dau was calling the church as "unreliable," "unScriptural," "unLutheran."

The issue facing Missouri is *not* a face-off between two personalities! Men come and go, and will soon lie buried, like Dau, Pieper, Walther. But the issue really at stake today is Missouri's old commitment to the Scriptural Word of God, a thing which distinguished her in this modern era as a truly evangelical, Biblical, Confessional Lutheran church, with declared readiness to contend for the faith, in accord with the precious, inspired, authoritative, absolutely trustworthy, inerrant Word of God. *This* is under attack!

It is hardly new. Other denominations have already been hit and most have succumbed. At fault is the uncritical use of the so-called Historical-Critical Method which sorely tore the churches in Europe already early in the nineteenth century, and, in part, was the plague from which our forefathers fled.

Now we are being told that it is "neutral," safe to use, absolutely essential for scholarly work on the Bible (as though conservative Biblical scholars cannot be scientific!), and harmless as long as the Gospel is kept safe.

The world is waiting. Missouri, whether she knew it or not, was the last large body within the Lutheran complex (in fact within Protestantism) holding out for "the old paths," where Holy Scripture was accepted, without forked tongue, as the *de facto* inspired Word of God.

THERE'S a note of sadness even among outsiders looking in. Leigh Jordahl, in *Dialog*, May 1973, puts the question squarely to Missouri's so-called "progressives":

Do you really believe that you have some special gift and grace so that even if you discard (as you certainly are) that principle of an absolutely inerrant Scripture, you can somehow do what no other denomination has so far managed to do: keep your fundamental theological presuppositions even while you engage in a historical-critical methodology that must mean a recognition of relativity and theological pluralism?

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## Realignment Now

**B**URIED somewhere in the center of the *Convention Workbook* (Resolutions 4-15) are the most dramatic of the thousands of resolutions to come before any convention of Missouri in her long history.

These proposed resolutions in essence call for the division of Missouri into two church bodies and for a peaceful division of her properties in some equitable manner.

*Affirm* appreciates the intensity of the polarization which the liberals have created in a Missouri that, until they began making their propaganda for the Historical-Critical Method some years ago, had been a unified church with so deep and broad a common understanding of what the Bible taught and what Lutheranism meant, that it had lived in relative doctrinal peace for many years.

But once some men began to advocate a new way of interpreting the Bible and a liberalization of Missouri's teaching foreign to her whole history, the situation in Missouri inevitably polarized. It had to. Those who stayed faithful to the Word and the Christ and the Gospel of God's love had to oppose the new ideas which the liberals proposed.

They were conscience-bound to take their stand on the inerrancy of the Word against those who treated it, to a great extent, as a matter of myth and untruth. They could not remain silent as other Missourians attacked such basic ideas as the fact that the resurrection of our Lord really took place, that Christ wasn't playing fast and loose with the truth when he referred to Moses as the author of the Pentateuch, that God has the power to intervene in history with miracles, and that the laws of gravity and of physics don't tie God's hands and make this a closed universe. It is open to His intervention—and especially important is the truth that it is open to His entrance into the world to save us for eternal life with Him.

**A**LL these doctrines the liberals, with their new ways of reading the Bible, threatened. So Missourians started taking sides; they became polarized; and at this hour they have taken sides more intensely than ever before in the history of the church.

The *Workbook* resolutions for realignment recognize this fact. Whether or not they explicitly state the reasons for realignment, those reasons seem obvious. Our Lord once said that a house divided against itself cannot stand. We have lived with the inner tension of our split for many years now; it is beginning to wear people out psychologically; they want a resolution to this problem; they want peace and the chance to unify themselves so they can get about their Father's business of evangelizing the world with the devotion the task deserves.

They know too that as loyal disciples of their Lord, they must sooner or later carry their faithful witness to the point at which they disassociate themselves from those who no longer walk the old and God-directed ways. They know that unless they do this, their witness becomes clouded, for they are associating in the same organization with liberals whose witness differs from theirs.

They also know that sometimes liberals urge that both groups, liberal and conservative, remain together in the same synod, the same church organization. The liberals point to the secular

society around us: it is pluralistic; they urge that the church too can continue as a pluralistic group, if both the liberals and the conservatives within it will agree to live by certain rules.

But the conservative disciple of our Lord knows that our Lord opposed a pluralistic church and wanted the church with its members to witness with a single voice (I Cor. 1, 10) to the eternal truth, important because it is His truth and it describes the way in which He in His love saved men for eternal life. They know there's no pluralism involved in that!

**S**O Missouri's conservatives must make a serious historical judgment at New Orleans. How much chance is there that the liberals will reverse their course and return to conservatism? What good effect will it have, if conservatives do not at New Orleans move toward realignment? Will it significantly help unify the church—around the Lord Missouri has always worshipped and the truth of His Word? So they hear talk that some liberals here and there are beginning to recognize that their situation in Missouri seems to be growing intolerable, that the firmness of the conservatives will remain unyielding on matters of doctrine, that the conservative strength has increased since the last convention and seems to be waxing—as conservatives hear that some liberals seem to be determined to maintain their liberalism and also to want "out" of Missouri—what shall they do?

What will be wise and most helpful in the long run?

No one can really foretell the future, of course.

But certain truths seem obvious, and among them is this: that considering Missouri's present circumstances, a realignment should be given serious thought.

Once again, only events at the convention itself can really help conservatives reach the best possible judgment. Conservatives need the New Orleans confrontation to tell them what the options are at the time the decision must actually be made.

Grant all that! Grant that in the end it looks as though the two schools of thought in Missouri are at an impasse! It might then be the wisest act of Missouri's history to respond to a liberal suggestion of a realignment with the response that steps be taken to make it a reality.

If the liberals left Missouri, no matter how small or large a minority they prove to be, conservatives could at last concentrate their forces on the task that is at hand: the great troubled world of men suffering and dying and needing the peace and love and forgiveness in Christ!

No conservative wants such a split in Missouri; it can prove to be most traumatic.

On the other hand, no sincere conservative wants to refuse to do the Lord's will! No matter at what cost it may be!

May God hear the constant conservative prayer for reconciliation in Christ—and if it be His will, may He give conservatives the strength and courage and wisdom and love to consider a realignment!

## Abortion and the Incarnation

**D**URING recent years conservative Christians have centered their main arguments against abortion on the scriptural evidence that life in the womb is both human and personal.

This argument is good, as far as it goes, for such evidence from Scripture is strong. Jeremiah 1:5 and Isaiah 49:1 both speak of God addressing a person, a human in the womb. Both use the Hebrew word, *Yatsar*, which invariably means, "to form, to create by giving shape to." Before God gave shape to Jeremiah, he was known to God as a person. Before formation took place in the womb, according to Isaiah, this was God's Servant.

In Psalm 51:5 David attributes human sin to himself at the time of both birth and conception. The only way for a pro-abortionist to try to get around these clear words is to claim that Psalm 51 has only one meaning (sin is bad) and then declare any other conclusion drawn from this Psalm to be irrelevant. Such an argument is an abuse of the so-called "historical-critical method."

Scripture attributes human sin not only to adults and children, but also to life in the womb. Yet Scripture never attributes human sin to either the male sperm or the female unfertilized ovum. Human sin does not exist in a vacuum. Where human sin exists, a human being exists.

The inspired writers were not given precise, scientific knowledge of conception or maturation (Ecclesiastes 11:5), but Psalm 139:15-16 reveals a deep, spiritual awareness that whatever happens in conception and early prenatal growth, a human being is loved and protected by God.

Yet, while all this evidence is important and true, I would suggest that we have not given enough attention to an equally vital argument: the Christological argument. When one denies that a child in the womb is completely and personally human, this denial has dire implications for our historic confession regarding Jesus Christ Himself.

**F**ROM the fourth through the seventh centuries the church had to battle against one lopsided heresy after another. Led by God, the church hammered out a series of statements which attempted to combat these false teachings. These statements appealed both to the central theme of salvation in Jesus Christ, and to all passages of Scripture relating to Christ's Person and especially to His Incarnation as described in Luke 1 and John 1.

Most of our people know these statements in their summary form in the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds. Jesus, our Lord and Savior, is not half a god and half a man. He is "perfect" God and "perfect" man, perfectly united in one Person. Starting when? **FROM THE MOMENT OF HIS CONCEPTION.**

The *Catalog of Testimonies* quotes Leo of Rome approvingly when he says:

We know that in our Redeemer two natures have united, and that while their properties remained, such a union of both substances has occurred that, from the time in which the Word became flesh in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, we are not to think of God without this, that He is man; nor of man without this, that He is God. God assumed the entire man, and so united Himself to man and man to Himself, that such nature is in the other, and neither passed into the other with the loss of its own attributes. (Triglot, page 1147).

Before someone reminds us that the *Catalog of Testimonies* is not an official part of the Book of Concord to which we are "bound," let's consider some clear statements from the *Formula of Concord, Epitome*, Article VIII, Affirmation 7:

Therefore we believe, teach and confess that Mary conceived and bore not only a plain, ordinary, mere man but the veritable Son of God; for this reason she is rightly called and truly is the mother of God. (Tappert, p. 488).

And again in Affirmation 10:

Therefore we believe, teach and confess that the Son of man according to His human nature is really (that is, in deed and in truth) exalted to the right hand of the omnipotent majesty and power of God, because He was assumed into God when He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in his mother's womb and His human nature was personally united with the Son of the Most High. (Tappert, p. 488).

And again, in the *Formula's Solid Declaration*, Article VIII, Affirmation 8:

But Christ did not receive this majesty, to which He was exalted according to His humanity, only after His resurrection from the dead and His ascension, but when He was conceived in His mother's womb and became man and when the divine and human natures were personally united. (Tappert pp. 593-4).

And again, the *Solid Declaration* quotes Luther from his *Great Confession Concerning the Holy Supper*:

Here you must take your stand and say that wherever Christ is according to the deity, He is there as a natural, divine person and is also naturally and personally there, as His conception in His mother's womb proves conclusively. For if He was the Son of God, He had to be in His mother's womb naturally and personally and become man. But if He is present naturally and personally wherever He is, then He must be man there, too, since He is not two separate persons but a single person. Wherever this person is, it is the single, indivisible Person, and if you can say, "Here is God", then you must also say, "Christ the man is present too". . . . They simply will not let themselves by separated and divided from each other. He has become one Person and never separates the assumed humanity from Himself. (Tappert, pp. 607-8).

This is the Book of Concord's understanding of Elizabeth's confession that Mary is the "mother of my Lord" (Luke 1:42-43). What was in Mary's womb at that moment was the "Lord," one Person, fully divine and fully human, our Savior.

**N**o doubt many sincere people have listened to the voice of this world and thought they saw no harm in guessing that the fetus is "non-human" or "pre-human" or "potentially human" or "evolving into humanity" or "human in a sense but not yet a person." All of these guesses are made so that one can say that "abortion is not really murdering a human person." It is really more.

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# On The News Front

## Application of HCM In Current CTM

Too often it is said that one may use the Historical-Critical Method with Lutheran presuppositions and thereby gain new insights without in any way attacking the integrity of the Biblical text.

The current *Concordia Theological Monthly* (May, 1973) features an article by Dr. Arlis J. Ehlen, "Deliverance at the Sea: Diversity and Unity in a Biblical Theme" (pp. 168-191).

Dr. Ehlen does an exegetical study of Exodus 13-15, following the Historical-Critical Method with its presuppositions and implications but presumably guided by Lutheran presuppositions.

A careful reading of this article underscores that "Lutheran presuppositions" is a meaningless term and in no way preserves the integrity of the text and the historicity of the account. Dr. Ehlen sees three layers of traditions together with the skillful hand of the final editor in the text, each interpreting the event for their age.

Excerpts (without footnotes) from the article follow:

"... Clearly, all testimony points to an ultimate unity: An amazing event must have occurred at the Reed Sea, by which the pursuing Egyptians were drowned and the fleeing Israelite slaves received their independence as a people; and this event could only be attributed to the power and saving will of Yahweh, their God. This event was so basic to Israel's faith that it was applied in many different ways to their relationship with Yahweh. This story of the event was told and retold with many different emphases and elaborations, drawing also from various other areas of the people's historical and religious experience.

"... We note that there is no mention of any activity on Israel's part, such as walking through the Sea on dry ground. The absence of such details is difficult to evaluate. Whether or not this throws any light on the historicity of various items in the prose accounts, it is more important to note that the purposes of the poet did not require these details even in a celebration of the event 12 verses long. To Yahweh belongs the praise as the Warrior who vanquishes His enemies through a variety of means. Each new detail, whether pictorial or historical, adds its voice in the rich chorus of testimony to Him who is 'awesome in renown, worker of wonders.' (V.11)

"One more voice is yet to be heard—in some ways the most important of all. It is that of the so-called redactor, who brought the several sources together into the canonical form of Ex. 13-15. Regardless of the extent to which we may have been willing to attribute inspiration to any or all of the earlier sources, we are bound by our doctrinal commitment to recognize the grace of inspiration as having guided this final major phase of the work. It is the intricately combined form of the text that is canonical and therefore authoritative for us. This leads to some immensely liberating and edifying observations. It was of course obvious to the anonymous but inspired man of God who did the work of redacting that the texts which he was bringing together and editing represented diverse testimonies to the same important event. If they were not diverse, he would feel no compulsion to preserve as much as possible of each lest anything of importance to the faith be lost. And if they did not refer to basically the same event, he would not have woven them together but left

them entirely separate, as he did with many other episodes in the several documents. Thus both aspects are part of God's purpose in inspiring this combined text. The event is to be regarded as one—a deeply significant one, as we have observed at length. It can be alluded to and its essence captured in a single brief phrase or it can be expanded into a long impressionistic poem or a detailed narrative. The diversities in detail and in theological application are not to cast doubt on the occurrence of the event but to convey the fullness of God's judgment and grace as these touch many kinds of people in many different situations. We may indeed be unable to reconstruct in our minds exactly what happened on that memorable occasion, and we may differ widely on factuality of various details. But we have been brought face to face with the acts and words of the Ancient of Days, the same God who has in these latter days both spoken and acted in His Son. The diversity of testimonies makes His words and deeds richly applicable to ourselves in all situations of life. But the Gospel message of His grace in saving us freely from our enemies remains changeless, as it reaches its peak in Jesus Christ."

## Australian Church Group Adopts Statement

The following statement has been adopted by the Executive Committee of the Commission on Theology of the Lutheran Church of Australia; it will be presented to their synod. *Affirm* brings this statement to the attention of its readers believing that it concisely expresses the position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod on this highly important matter.

Doctrinal statements standing under the norms of the Scripture and the Confessions may not for that reason be regarded as having no binding force. For it clearly is the right and duty of the Church to define in the face of current challenges, how she understands the Scriptures and the Confessions. Moreover, it would be both meaningless and dishonest for the Church to tolerate within her ranks persistent public contradiction of what she solemnly declares to be Biblical and Confessional teaching.

## Occasional Papers

A special collection of scholarly essays on the Historical-Critical Method and its meaning for Bible interpretation has been published by *Affirm*. Copies of *Occasional Papers* have been mailed to all pastors and a selected group of laymen. We will be happy to mail to you also this invaluable analysis of Bible interpretation on a first-come, first served basis, as long as the supply lasts. Individual copies are \$1.00 each, and in bulk orders of 5 or more copies mailed to the same address they are 50 cents each. Send all orders with check or money order to:

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## ALC Fellowship . . .

(Continued from Page 3)

The ALC has officially aggravated the issue meanwhile by countenancing the ordination of women into the pastoral office and actually ordaining a young lady. This in conscious opposition to the urgent assertions of President Harms and President Preus that such an act would be considered unbrotherly by Missourians and would undermine the existent fellowship. The Milwaukee Convention, after recognizing "that serious differences in the doctrine of the authority of Scripture still exist between members of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church," resolved that fellowship be continued, but on a restricted basis whereby any new implementation be deferred until the doctrinal concerns be settled. Since then Milwaukee representatives of the two synods have met four times, trying somehow to settle the doctrinal differences.

MEANWHILE President Knutson, the Church Council of the ALC and the ALC in convention responded to Missouri's request that the ALC seriously reconsider ordaining women into the pastoral office and restudy its doctrine concerning Scripture and church fellowship. President Knutson himself led the way. In a written statement of September 7th, 1971 he recommitted himself to the ordination of women. In another statement of the same day Knutson questioned whether it was not Missouri which had changed its understanding of fellowship, apparently because Missouri presumed to question ALC practice on ordination of women. In the same statement he simply declared that the ALC held to the right understanding of Biblical authority, this in response to the complaints and misgivings of many Missourians over what was actually taught on this matter throughout the ALC and by Knutson himself. In a December 1971 communication, Knutson frankly rejected the Missouri Synod position on dealing with lodgery as legalistic. In an interview the following October 6th, President Knutson commented on the investigation of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis by our synodical president and on the theology of the *Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*. "We can't accept that kind of theology," Knutson said. Bishop Knutson had set the stage. Except for the last two points both the Church Council and the ALC Synod itself followed completely Knutson's lead in response to Missouri's concerns.

What else can our five man Commission on Fellowship with the ALC conclude from such developments than that there has been no progress at all toward resolving the doctrinal differences with the ALC. It is interesting to observe that Knutson himself in his September 7th, 1971 statement conceded that doctrinal consensus between the two synods did not exist. There had in fact been retrogression. And so Missouri's representatives to the ALC-LC-MS Commission on Fellowship in their report must "state its deep regret that 4 years of discussions in the Commission on Fellowship have not produced evidence that 'serious differences in the doctrine of the authority of Scripture' (1971 Resolution 3-21, Fourth 'whereas') have been resolved, or that our two church bodies have achieved a common understanding 'on what fellowship involves' (Resolution 3-21, Third 'Whereas')." And the report scores the ALC for rejecting Missouri's plea to reconsider the ordination of women into the pastoral ministry.

The Missouri representatives also recommend, and the Commission on Theology and Church Relations concurs, that Synod continue to try to reach agreement with the ALC on the ordination of women, the authority of Scripture and other controverted

points. And they advise Synod to continue in fellowship under the conditions stated at Milwaukee, namely that our "pastors, congregations, boards, and commissions, because of doctrinal concerns still remaining between the two church bodies . . . defer new implementation of fellowship with the American Lutheran Church (1971 Resolution 3-21, last 'Resolved') until our synod's concerns are resolved."

WHAT about this? One gets the distinct impression that our representatives and our CTCR for the most part do not like our present fellowship with the ALC which is going its own unionistic and liberal way with or without Missouri; that they do not know what to do about it, for our relationship with the ALC has deteriorated and the ALC is not seriously listening to our admonition; that they have no valid Scriptural reason and do not try to offer any for continuing in the present fellowship; and that they are pretty well convinced by now that there never was a Scriptural basis for the declaration of fellowship in the first place. But they do not want to bell the cat. No leader or representative or commissioner wants to be the party to call for action, for the decisive action that frankly recognizes what our CTCR and our representatives are telling us, namely that there never was a true basis for pulpit and altar fellowship with the ALC, that attempts to secure such a basis belatedly have broken down, and that there is no hope that such a basis of unity in doctrine can possibly be achieved as things now progress.

This is the dilemma, the impossible situation, Synod finds itself in today. We are in a fellowship with the ALC with all that that implies in terms of pulpit and altar fellowship and mutual recognition of the doctrine of the other church body. We discover that the basis for such fellowship is wanting: the ALC is guilty of false doctrine, fully committed to destructive Biblical criticism and a denial of Scripture's inerrancy, committed to an un-Scriptural practice of ordaining women into the public ministry, committed to a unionistic and un-Scriptural doctrine of church fellowship. We point this out to our new sister synod and ask her to change her position. She nicely refuses. Her refusal to reconsider the ordination of women is as final and irrevocable as the Council of Trent's rejection of justification by faith. There is no turning back. Yet, we continue this fellowship and are urged to remain in it.

How can we extricate ourselves from this compromise? Only by the honest action of suspending fellowship, terminating a relationship whereby we recognize the ALC as a Scripture based, orthodox Lutheran synod.

I KNOW this sounds radical, especially when our synodical officers and representatives and commissions have opted for the status quo. The magic word "fellowship"—like the emotion laden word "love"—attracts and grabs us who have longed and prayed and strived for true doctrinal unity among Lutherans so long. One cannot oppose it, or suspend it, but only embrace it—that is how we feel toward fellowship.

But such a reaction is not evangelical (showing concern for the Gospel of Christ), not Lutheran, not Scriptural; but pure pietism, emotionalism, enthusiasm.

I believe that one of the tragic by-products of our many problems in the Missouri Synod today is a sort of politicizing process which pervades the issues facing us. I mean that whether we are dealing with differences relative to membership in LCUSA or ALC fellowship or the seminary investigation or

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## Doctrinal Review...

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LET us look at an illustration. Concordia Publishing House (CPH) handles the review of its manuscripts through its president's office. One of his secretaries may distribute or assign materials for review by one of the many reviewers available to CPH. They may be interested in the expeditious processing of their products. That means, perhaps, that if a manuscript is not reviewed to the satisfaction, e.g., to the staff of the Board for Parish Education (*Mission: Life* materials), another reviewer may be chosen who may be expected to be more sympathetic and agreeable in his judgment of the materials submitted.

*The fragmentation of the review process is a serious problem.* The agencies (specifically CPH) determine who among the reviewers assigned to them shall review which materials. Obviously, such choices entail often serious theological and ethical decisions.

Another serious deficiency in the present provisions for doctrinal review, for example, allows a reviewer for the Board of Parish Education hardly ever to see more than isolated segments of a total production. Since such a reviewer cannot evaluate his assigned portion in the context of the entire project, he is likely to pass doubtful formulations and even doubtful materials. I had such an experience recently. As soon as I began to object to both formulations and content, CPH sent the remainder of the project to other reviewers.

Great attention should be given to the fact that CPH does exercise (as it did not when the Seminary faculty had charge of doctrinal review) a remarkably comprehensive influence or even control over doctrinal review of its products. To the extent that this is so, CPH has actually removed itself from an attentively responsible relationship to Synod. The leadership of CPH can now determine very largely its own doctrinal policies, without seriously reckoning with the doctrinal resolutions of Synod which are ostensibly binding also upon CPH.

DOCTRINAL review of *The Lutheran Witness Reporter* is a particularly sensitive area. It is said that reviewers do not receive all materials intended for publication, but only such materials as the editorial staff apportions to each one according to the preferences of the staff.

It seems that Synod would do well by placing official periodicals under the *direct* supervision and responsibility of the *praesidium* of Synod. They might co-opt specialists in journalism for the purpose of receiving professional advice.

The following might be considered:

1. The volume of publications have become so great that Synod very much needs a doctrinally and ethically coherent policy for all its publications. For example,

an editor of a synodical publication ought to possess sufficient ethical sensitivity to follow synodical policy or to resign when he is in opposition to the policies of Synod, or else he ought not have the position.

2. Although the New Orleans *Convention Workbook*, p. 172, under V. *Recommendations*, states that the Board of Directors proposes to Synod that the recommendations for a General Editor be declined, because the present doctrinal review structure has only been recently introduced, the facts seem to show that Synod does need an office where the operational responsibility for doctrinal review resides. Whether this function is given to a "General Editor" or to a "Director of Publications" is not of great significance. What is needed is an operationally supervising office, adequately staffed, for the purpose of coordinating the review of all publications for Synod, under the supervisory responsibilities of the President of Synod, and to provide swift and complete advice for action by the President of Synod.

3. Instead of merely blue-pencilling the aberrations of editorial units, such editors should be held directly accountable for the content of their publications in such a way that consistent infractions of public doctrine or of articles of faith and of ethical principles will result in removal either for reasons of perversity or of competence, or both.

4. The section of the *Handbook* on Doctrinal Review (p. 199-202) should be completely re-written, so that the stages of responsibility for doctrinal review are not disguised or obscured by the interposition of Boards or Commissions, or their staffs. Instead, doctrinal review should be exercised directly through an agent of the President of Synod. It should be made entirely explicit that the doctrinal accountability of all Boards and Commissions to the President of Synod for the content of their publications is not merely "advisory," but mandatory. For example, By-Law 11.157d (*Handbook*, p. 200) must be related to By-Law 3.07a, which says, "Resolutions of the Synod are binding on the Districts."

The Lutheran Confessions to which our synod subscribes without reservation in its Article II reveal that we with the confessions must cooperate with one another in the implementation of the effort at concord through God's diligent supervision of printers—which certainly means doctrinal review (Preface to the Book of Concord, Tappert, page 14). If we are to remain true to God's Word in our entire educational process through our congregations, nothing less than effective doctrinal review must be present for faithful confession and proclamation of pure doctrine drawn from the Holy Scriptures.


Dr. Waldo J. Werning  
Executive Secretary of Stewardship  
South Wisconsin District  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

## What HCM Means . . .

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perimenting with sex, he may experiment with drugs. He may think that we must have world peace at any price so that he can be free to enjoy life as long as he can "because that's all there is." He will want to "keep on trucking" even if he does not really know why. Should such an one be challenged with what God says in His Word about His design for human life, he will brush the Holy Scriptures aside as just another book.

When such a student finds that he has swallowed much speculation, and he finds that he is morally bankrupt, he may despair. He may feel terribly guilty about what he has done. He may search for a purpose for living in movements. He may seek "enlightenment" in Eastern religions. In a cause and in mysticism he will be taught to rely upon himself, but too often he comes to the realization that he is not very reliable. However, today he can hear a fellow student speak of how he was delivered from despair, guilt, and purposelessness. He will hear that sin and hopelessness are natural and that they are the result of man's separation from God. Our all-too-typical student will be urged to lay his sins on Jesus, the precious Lamb of God. He will be urged to accept Jesus and what God in Christ has done for him. By the Word of God, the Holy Spirit will convict him of his sin and convert him to Christ. Through the witness of a Christian student, our friend will learn that Jesus loves him, just as he is, so much that He died for him. The student who accepts this Great News will want to grow in the grace of God, and his peers will show him that that is done by getting "into" the Bible. And in the study of the Scriptures, he will learn to accept things which he cannot understand. After accepting the amazing truth that God loved him and redeemed him, the other miracles he reads about in the Bible do not startle him. Nothing is too difficult for his God.



Now, what if our synod no longer provides ministries that are without reservation committed to Jesus and His Word? What if we sell out our theological heritage of *sola gratis*, *sola fide*, *solus Christus*, and *sola scriptura*? One answer is that we won't have the opportunity to serve and involve young people alive in Christ in our ministries. Furthermore, can we as a synod adopt a secular approach to knowledge and to the Bible and think that it will not effect our commitment to Jesus and to His Holy Word? We are foolish if we think that what has happened to others cannot happen to us. And shall we give up our appreciation for miracles when Harvard's Owen Gingerich, astronomer and historian of science, has said, "There might be non-causal things in the world"? (*Time*, April 23, 1973, page 86). Indeed, our faith is based on "non-causal things." Therefore, you either believe it or you don't!

The Rev. James T. Cumming  
Campus Pastor, Lutheran Student Center  
Chapel of St. Timothy the Learner  
Western Illinois University  
Macomb, Illinois

P.S. If anyone doubts the extent of the commitment of young Christians to the Bible, please note the following: This pastor was amazed and pleased when he learned that what we have called the Order of Creation is observed in the dormitory Bible studies on our campus. Men teach men, women teach women, and in mixed groups men lead.

## From a Parish Pastor . . .

Bible interpretation is not confined within the walls of seminary classrooms. The science of interpretive study of the Holy Scriptures to determine the intended meaning of the text is not the exclusive domain of the theological professor. It is vitally important to the general practitioner, the parish pastor. What God is saying to man in His Word may be speculated, philosophized, conjectured, scrutinized, dissected, analyzed and criticized within the classroom. Professor and student may, within the learning process, grapple with ancient histories, wrestle with philosophical and sociological traditions of past ages, all within the structure of academic experimentation. But the parish pastor, ministering to the needs of God's people, is on the firing line of bereavement, guilt, anxiety, loneliness, despair and death. The salvos of Satan's might and power are directed to God's sheep and lambs, and the under-shepherd must do battle. He cannot afford the luxury of academic experimentation. He must come "with a sword" that will offensively put to flight the enemy, and restore peace and build faith—a sword that is sharp and clean, sound and tempered, usable and effective. Such a sword is the Holy Spirit's own gift—the Word of God.

This Word of God, this "sword of the Spirit," must not be a result of academic experimenting nor of logical conclusions based on man-made judgments and presuppositions. It must be a message of absolutes, a communication of God's unchangeable truth, a factual, errorless word from God to man. Absolute, unchangeable, factual and errorless—not only in the prime message that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself," but, as the Spirit convicts man of this truth, so he also becomes convicted that all of God's statements to man must be factually errorless and unchangeably absolute. While God speaks to man authoritatively, and man is to believe what God says simply because God has said it, it is most interesting to note that many of God's promises to man are based upon historic, factual events of God's past performances. In other words, God says, in effect, "You can believe Me, because of My past accomplishments." God uses His past "track record" to prove He can and will fulfill His promises, not only in matters pertaining to the Gospel and salvation, but also in the problems and crises of everyday life. The promised "Seed" of Abraham which St. Paul calls "Christ" was reinforced by a factual historic accomplishment of God, "I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees." To Isaac God said, "I am the God of Abraham, thy father," and after this historic identification Isaac is assured of the blessing. Who has counted the times that God's promises to Israel were based upon performances of God's action in past history? He says, "I am the Lord God, that brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt." Not only were God's people reminded of a symbolic concept of protection, but actual historic happenings were recalled by God to reassure His people that He would bless them and keep His promises. God reminds Israel of specific instances of the historic past: the Manna, the Guiding Pillar of Fire and Cloud in the Wilderness, the Parting of the Red Sea, the Miracles at Sinai, the Water which Flowed from the Rock, and many others. All of these historic events were used to speak comfort and assurance to God's people that they might know His promises are true.

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## What HCM Means . . .

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Not only are these factual historic events used to prove God's power and might, but also to reassure God's people of His atoning act of love in Christ Jesus. The Savior used historic, miraculous events of the past to provide both example and understanding of His future promises: Promising His return to judgment, the Lord Jesus refers to "the days of Noah," the miracle of Lot's wife and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Prophesying His crucifixion, Jesus draws upon the account of Moses and the brazen serpent in the wilderness. Foretelling His burial in the bosom of the earth, the Savior refers to Jonah's three-day confinement in the fish's belly.

References to historic events by Jesus, Paul, Peter, the writer to the Hebrews, etc. in no way detract from the marvelous work of the Holy Spirit, who, through the Gospel, convicts man of his salvation through Jesus Christ. Since the controlling Spirit of God moved the holy writers to employ the use of history, it is difficult to indict the Holy Spirit with self-destruction. The message of the saving Gospel of Christ and the glorious promises of God together with their historic examples are all spirit-moved and God-breathed to assure and comfort, strengthen and sustain God's people.

The parish pastor must possess just such a tool that is absolute and authoritative, not only in the message of salvation, through Jesus, but a tool that is filled with convicting truths about every issue of life. He must be able, by precept and example, in the Word of God, affirm that God not only can, but did protect, defend, sustain, comfort, uplift and preserve His own, and He did it with miraculous power—and more, He still does! The general practitioner needs to point to the message of God's love in Christ and demonstrate how this Christ brings all of the promises of God into focus, promises for our salvation, and promises also for the living of this life. He must be able to minister to God's people the truth of the Gospel, and by the errorless examples of the Bible's history demonstrate the glorious fact that because Christ is real and the Gospel is true, God will also, with the atoning Christ, freely give us all things, even as the Scriptures teach this truth by factual, historic example.

The Rev. Richard P. Musser  
Pastor, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

## From a Professor . . .

I have been invited to comment on this document as a professor emeritus, but how does this title qualify me to undertake such a task? Well, here are my credentials: I studied at Concordia College, Fort Wayne, Ind. (1909-15); at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo. (1915-18); took courses in propaedeutics and hermeneutics in Concordia Seminary's first correspondence school (1924); studied at Washington University, St. Louis, Mo. (M. A. 1930, history as a major, general literature as a minor); and at the University of Chicago (Ph.D. 1943, majoring in history and historical methodology).

Four of my professors at Fort Wayne had been students of Dr. C. F. W. Walther, one of the founders of the Missouri Synod, one of these had also been his colleague. Five of my professors at St. Louis had been Walther's students, one of them also his colleague.

Prof. Ludwig E. Fuerbringer's *Theologische Hermeneutik*, a manual used at Concordia Seminary during my student days, defended the Historical-Grammatical view. Previously Carl Gottlob Hofmann's *Institutiones theologicae exegeticae*, republished by Concordia Publishing House in 1876, had been used as a textbook and, like Fuerbringer's manual (*Leitfaden*), presented the same view. I pursued this view in my parish ministry (1918-25), as a teacher of history at St. Paul's College, Concordia, Mo. (1925-46), and as a professor of systematic theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo. (1946-71).

At the University of Chicago the radical position held sway during my student days. At the so-called Bad Boll conferences, held in Germany, France, and England, which I attended in 1950, the Missouri Synod conferees met with all three views. Inasmuch as the radical view at the University of Chicago, like that at many other American seminaries and universities, was largely an import from Germany, I was not surprised to find it there.

All three views are in one shape or another as old as Christianity itself. The Bereans examined the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so (Acts 17:11); the Sadducees excised the resurrection (Matthew 22:23) and angels (Acts 23:8) from the Scriptures. In any case, it is obvious that until most recent times the Historical-Grammatical view prevailed in the schools of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The other views have either recently been imported directly from Germany, mostly since the Bad Boll conferences, or have been absorbed from German imports at American theological schools. Of course, America has devised some additions of its own!

Now after all this, my evaluation in devastating brevity: With the Historical-Grammatical view a wise man builds his house upon a rock; with the other two views a foolish man builds his house upon the sand. The CTCR's comparative study most aptly makes it possible to distinguish the one from the other.

Dr. Lewis W. Spitz, Sr.  
Professor Emeritus  
Concordia Seminary  
St. Louis, Missouri

## From a Teacher . . .

As a Christian teacher, I believe Holy Scripture to be the only source and norm of Christian faith and life. The Bible does not merely contain the Word of God, but is the very Word of God.

The Historical-Critical Method would have disastrous results in the classroom, especially in that it destroys the authority of Scripture and undermines Him who loves children, Jesus. If I were to espouse and practice the Historical-Critical Method, my teaching would necessarily have to change to include the following:

1) *What the Biblical writers report is not necessarily true and factual.* They received their information through oral tradition. Content and context could have been changed. The information that the writers received was subject to growth and development. What Scripture says could be a) genuine, b) edited, or c) completely erroneous.

2) *We, as twentieth century people, must cast serious doubt on any Scriptural account of the miraculous or supernatural.* Our experience and senses tell us that dead people stay

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## In Your Hands . .

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as our Savior only because of the power of the Holy Spirit working through that Gospel. The question is not why I believe, it is rather what I believe. How do you know if your pastor is preaching the pure Gospel? By going to God's Word and comparing what he says with what God says. For that you need a reliable Word.

**ALLOW** me to demonstrate the problem we face with a rather simple illustration. I manage Camp Arcadia during the summer months. We have our own water supply, a well sunk several hundred feet into a subterranean pool or stream. The water in this pool is absolutely pure, it is so far beneath the surface that all impurities are filtered out. Yet we have to constantly guard against serving the guests impure water and thereby causing a rash of stomach problems. Where can the bacteria enter? During the pumping, distribution and dispensing of the water, of course. The well head must be protected from ground water; the pipes must be perfect, the pump clean.

So it is with the Gospel. The Bible is similar to the underground pool, and the Gospel is like the water. No one shall ever destroy or eradicate the Gospel; it shall always remain pure. Yet last Sunday the Bible (and Gospel) were lying on hundreds of pulpits in front of preachers who were proclaiming anything but a pure Gospel. What had happened? The 'pump' that they used to draw their 'gospel' from the Bible was faulty and the 'pipe' was full of leaks.

The Historical-Critical Method is such a faulty 'pump,' a 'pipe' full of leaks. When you start teaching that the Bible is only partially true, you leave it up to the individual to decide what is truth and what is error. In the process human reason enters in and stands in judgment over God's Word. That invariably leads to contamination. The real problem is that this goes largely undetected, because you have lost the pure sample to compare it with. You cannot taste bacteria; your first indication may be the pains preceding death.

It is a big task which we, your fellow church members, have delegated to you. Please promise you won't take it lightly. Turn to God often for courage, support and guidance. Listen to Him; let His Word speak to your heart; be responsive to His urgings. Remember, my prayers will be among the thousands that will arise to His throne of grace on your behalf every day. May God richly bless you.

Richard G. Korthals  
Lay Evangelist  
Arcadia, Michigan

## Affirm

*Affirm*, sponsored by Balance Inc., is published monthly or more frequently by a group of its members concerned about theological and related developments in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

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## ALC Fellowship . .

(Continued from Page 16)

some other matter we seek political solutions. Political in the bad sense. We talk around the point, avoid issues and head-on confrontation, we maneuver, procrastinate, compromise, opt for the status quo—all of which seems easier, gentler, even more loving and in the end more successful an approach to our problems. And meanwhile principle, Lutheran principle, Scriptural principle is lost sight of. There is a place for politics in the church, if by that we mean honesty as candidates seek office, frankness and outspokenness as we commit ourselves to issues and join ourselves to programs. But there is no place in the church today for evasion and avoiding issues. Especially now. And especially in the matter of ALC fellowship. We cannot push the problems, the compromise, yes, the dishonesty of this entanglement into the background, just because another crucial issue, the Seminary problem, the doctrinal controversy in our synod, takes precedence and seems to eclipse all other issues.

One of the classic confessions of our Lutheran Church was the Formula of Concord, written more than thirty years after the Reformation. Its purpose was to achieve among Lutherans, sorely divided by doctrinal controversy, a consensus and agreement in all doctrine which was believed to be necessary for inclusion among those who professed the name Lutheran and subscribed the Lutheran Confessions. For Missouri today to remain in a pulpit and altar fellowship which never had this sound doctrinal basis and then to allow other important issues to crowd out any serious reconsideration of this matter clearly jeopardizes Missouri's future as a confessional and confessing Lutheran church. At the very time when we are fighting for our lives in our own synod against the use of the Historical-Critical Method which threatens the authority of the Word of God we cannot continue to embrace in the most intimate fellowship a synod that is totally committed to this destructive approach to God's Word.

Yes, let us keep our priorities straight. Let us first settle our own doctrinal controversies at New Orleans. But let us not fail to meet our other obligations to hallow God's name, remain faithful to His Gospel and retain our character as a confessing church.

Dr. Robert D. Preus  
Concordia Seminary  
St. Louis, Missouri

## The Editorial Group

The Rev. William T. Eggers  
Richard G. Korthals  
Dr. Walter A. Maier  
The Rev. Ewald J. Otto

## Editorial Policy

While the articles in *Affirm* with their applications to contemporary events rest on Biblical truths, they do not necessarily in all their details represent the views of The Editorial Group. Any divergence of opinion, however, falls within the latitude allowed by Article II of the Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

For *Affirm* is unashamedly dedicated to preserving, under grace Missouri's priceless theological heritage, based on the Word and set forth in the Book of Concord, as both have been commonly understood in Missouri until the most recent times.

## Workbook Issues

(Continued from Page 6)

### Faculty Committees and Tenure

The New Orleans *Workbook* contains more than a dozen requests to change the procedure by which men are now elected to the presidency of any of Synod's schools. *Affirm*, which called attention to this issue before the Milwaukee convention, is happy to find so many congregations across the country deeply concerned about it.

The issue is simply that the faculty committee of a school, according to Missouri's rules, can now exercise a total veto power over any and all candidates for such a presidency, though they have been proposed by properly authorized people. *Affirm* writers like Lutze and Lang during the last several years have pointed out that no other Lutheran church body grants such a small faculty committee these drastic powers and that anything similar would be unthinkable in the world of secular education. Faculty committees on a school's presidency do exist and function in a useful way in secular and other religious schools; they properly advise those with the authority to elect a president but they don't veto their choices.

The practical upshot of this provision is that a small and liberal faculty committee may stymie the election of a conservative-orthodox school president whom the electors unanimously agree on. Some thought that the recent long delay in choosing a president for Synod's school at Fort Wayne, a situation created by the faculty committee vetoing candidates desired by the Board of Control, verged on the scandalous.

*Affirm* urges delegates to abolish the veto powers of this committee.

*Affirm* also urges New Orleans to give serious consideration to the lifetime tenure its school presidents now have. Some presidents may fall out of step with the changing social conditions in which the church must work. Others may try—and there have been examples—not to reflect the beliefs of Missouri's great majority, but to lead the church into an ever greater liberalization of doctrine and practice.

Conservatives by their very nature appreciate the need for continuity; they desire to conserve whatever is worthwhile enough to ride the crest of change. And they know the value of tenure in office.

But they also know that times and people change and adjustments have to be made. Missouri demands that the leader of the entire church stand for re-election every four years. In this way the whole synod can speak its mind on the key leadership it has had. It can also decide once more about its other leadership on various levels.

There's just as much reason for reviewing on a regular basis the course a school president has pursued. He too stands in a vital position with influential powers over the education of future clergy and other workers in the church.

You will find the resolutions dealing with these matters around the 6-30 section of the *Workbook*. They are worth your further thought. At the very least, on this last issue, the convention ought to establish a committee to report out in several years its evaluation of the tenure our schools' presidents ought to have in the future. That exploration will be worth the few dollars it

costs. We have a lot of clergy and teacher training and church history at stake.

### Ordaining Women

It doesn't seem likely that the ordination of women will be one of the major questions of the New Orleans convention. Too many other issues of overarching importance will tend to crowd it off the stage.

But a footnote to the resolutions in the *Workbook* on this issue (they cluster around the 2-50's) may be worthwhile. Since the ALC has accepted the ordination of women as proper, our continuing fellowship with it might lead to a strange and embarrassing position. Would we discipline a Missouri congregation and/or pastor who had pulpit fellowship—perhaps in a Missouri church—with and ordained woman belonging to the ALC clergy? Shouldn't we extricate ourselves from such possibilities by taking the clear and decisive stand on ALC fellowship: it is not for Missouri until matters like this have been resolved? And should we permit, as some apparently are willing to do, our formal ALC ties to persuade us to compromise the Bible on this issue and sanction the ordination of women? That would indeed be letting an unwholesome change in through the back door, but stranger things than that have happened in the history of the church.

### Campus Ministries

Some of the confusions which beset Missouri arise from a supposed conflict between what today is "practical" and what is doctrinally correct. One of these cloudy areas is the campus ministry Missouri carries on with other Lutheran bodies (cf. *Workbook*, 2-98A ff). Since these joint ministries involve the ALC and the LCA (with whom Missouri has no formal fellowship), a number of Missouri's members point up the fact that such ministries are "unionistic," in conflict with the doctrines we officially hold. That's undoubtedly true.

The other side of the argument focuses on the "impracticality" of having various Lutheran ministries on the same campus and their cost. Put in those simple terms, it becomes clear that Missouri's pocketbook is being used as a temptation to erode her firm stance against unionism. However difficult the problem of these campus ministries may be, Missouri certainly should again study this matter in an effort to find ways and means of efficiently meeting her campus obligations without compromising her firm doctrinal position. *Affirm* hopes the delegates at the Convention will see the dangers of the campus ministry we now are involved in and search for better answers to the campus problem than the answers Missouri has drifted into.

### LCUSA

Apparently not even the Board of Directors of LC-MS knows how LCUSA spends its money. To *Affirm* this seems incredible! *Affirm* believes that not only the Board of Directors, but also everyone who contributes to the mission program of LC-MS (from which our annual support monies of LCUSA are taken) has a right to know how this money is spent. It isn't that the Board hasn't tried to find out. In the first column of page 48 of the *Convention Workbook* the Board tells New Orleans, "It must be admitted, however, that it has been extremely difficult because of varying structures and of differing budget approaches to pinpoint not only the specific programs and activities but above all their specific cost, which in turn would enable the Synod to make a more recent judgment as to the value of any specific program or activity." The Board notes, however, that it has been "given the assurance that as time goes on the budgeting in the Lutheran Council will delve to a deeper level at which it will be easier to determine the cost of individual programs and activities."

(Continued on Page 22)



## Mission Affirmations . . .

(Continued from Page 9)

THE Mission Affirmations are inadequate because they do not center the Mission of the Church around the means of Grace. The orientation appears to be one of the betterment of humanity. A *Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* affirms the Biblical orientation: We believe, teach, and confess that the primary mission of the church is to make disciples of every nation by bearing witness to Jesus Christ through the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Other necessary activities of the church, such as ministering to men's physical needs, are to serve the church's primary mission and its goal that men will believe and confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. We therefore reject any views of the mission of the church which imply: That an adequate or complete witness to Jesus Christ can be made without proclaiming or verbalizing the Gospel.

In the Church, we dare not talk missions if we omit the mission assigned by Christ to the Church. We dare not stress a "loving approach and understanding" and omit the message of the Law and the Gospel, of Repentance and Remission of Sins. Note what the Lutheran Confessions say: *In the last chapter of Luke (24:47) Christ commands that penitence and forgiveness of sins should be preached in His name. The Gospel declares that all men are under sin and are worthy of eternal wrath and death. For Christ's sake it offers forgiveness of sins and justification, which are received by faith. By its accusations, the preaching of penitence terrifies our consciences with real and serious fears. For these, our hearts must again receive consolation. This happens if they believe Christ's promise that for His sake we have the forgiveness of sins. (Apology IV, 62) and: In these matters, which concern the external, spoken Word, we must hold firmly to the conviction that God gives no one His Spirit or grace except through or with the external Word which comes before. (Smalcald Articles III, viii 3)*

The Mission Affirmations are inappropriate because they do not address themselves to the primary need of man in any age, much less the 1970's. Nor do they address themselves to the real issues facing the Church in Mission.

The church should reiterate its certainty about the validity of *Biblical Affirmations* in this age of change. The church must lift its voice and show discernment when the institutional church is afflicted with doctrinal uncertainty, theological novelty, and outright apostasy. The church needs to "discern the spirits whether they be of God." Non-Christian religious systems pose an oppressive threat to the growth of the Church and demand careful assessment and response. Many Biblical and Lutheran distinctives are being blurred today.

**AFFIRMATIONS** are needed to declare a clearer understanding of evangelistic mission in which every member must be involved. It must show a deeper compassion for the spiritual lostness of men and women for eternity with the realization that there can be no substitute for speaking the Gospel so that all men will hear of Christ before they die. *(All who would be saved must hear this preaching, for the preaching and the hearing of God's Word are the Holy*

*Spirit's instrument in, with, and through which He wills to act efficaciously, to convert men to God, and to work in them both to will and to achieve"* (Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration II, 52). They should speak about the necessity of all believers receiving Scriptural indoctrination, meeting together constantly under the impact and teaching of the Apostolic Word, mobilizing and equipping believers for the great task of evangelizing our generation.

*The Gospel requires of those who preside over the churches that they preach the Gospel, remit sins, administer the Sacraments, and, in addition, exercise jurisdiction, that is, excommunicate those who are guilty of notorious crimes and absolve those who repent."* (Power and Primacy of the Pope 60)

*If a person will not hear preaching or read the Word of God, but despises the Word and the community of God, dies in this condition, and perishes in his sins, he can neither comfort himself with God's eternal election nor obtain His mercy. For Christ, in whom we are elected, offers His grace to all men in the Word and the Holy Sacraments, earnestly wills that we hear it, and has promised that, where two or three are gathered together in His name and occupy themselves with His Holy Word, He is in the midst of them."* (FC, SD, II, 57).

The Rev. Wilbert J. Sohns  
Pastor, Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church  
Broomfield, Colorado

\*Proceedings of the 1965 Detroit Convention—46th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

## Workbook Issues . . .

(Continued from Page 21)

*Affirm* hopes so. In fact, in spite of the recommendation of the Board of Directors, it raises the question as to whether or not, in view of this high degree of fiscal ignorance, the LC-MS should continue in LCUSA. It also raises serious questions concerning the measure of responsibility the LC-MS Board has exercised in the management of funds committed to it by members of Synod. Moreover, in view of the LCUSA attacks on Dr. J. A. O. Preus and his stand for conservative Lutheranism in Missouri, the question of our continued membership in LCUSA is even more urgent.

### Elections

Perhaps the most crucial item on the New Orleans agenda is its elections. *Affirm* states this, knowing full well the overriding importance of the doctrinal issues which will come before the Convention, the need to continue to understand that God and His Word must remain central, and the decisive importance of the Convention's stand on Missouri's methodology in interpreting God's Word. *Affirm* knows that men aren't going to save the church; only God in His grace can do that. However, *Affirm* remains highly conscious of the other, realistic side of that truth: God uses men, especially in key positions, to mold the history of the church. If Missouri at New Orleans voted conservatively on every issue but elected to office liberals, who reject such a conservative stance, the conservative position may find itself in great difficulties.

The presidency of Missouri, the praesidium, board members, the members of the Boards of Control of Missouri's schools, and a host of other significant officials are of vital importance to the future of Missouri. If you are a delegate, don't throw your ballot away! Be sure that the candidates for whom you vote are men who will truly represent and promote conservative Lutheranism!

## The Cato Mentality . . .

(Continued from Page 12)

In other words, is the Cato mentality really the answer? Shall we believe those who cry, *Missouri delenda est*, as though it were a good thing? A good thing to wipe out "old Missouri?" that is:

its inflexible commitment to purity of doctrine, for the sake of the Gospel?  
its striving for unity in the church on a solid Scriptural, Confessional base?  
its love for its schools (elementary, high school, prep school, seminary)?  
its initiative to reach out creatively, with various media, into all the world with the message of Christ's atoning, vicarious sacrifice for every sinner?  
its dedication to serve the whole man, the sick, the handicapped, the aged?  
its readiness to go everywhere with the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins?

Only the man afflicted with the "Cato mentality" will believe that "Missouri must be destroyed."

There is "a time to break down, and a time to build up," as the preacher says, Ecclesiastes 3, 3. But when it comes to building, as St. Paul reminds us, "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," and "let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon!" (I Cor. 3, 10f). The apostle also supplies the plumbline by which the church in any century is to be about its task: "For all the ancient Scriptures were written for our own instruction, in order that through the encouragement they give us we may maintain our hope with fortitude; (and) . . . that with one mind and one voice you may praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 15, 4.6).

It was the prophet Jeremiah who first spoke of "the old paths."

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. (Jeremiah 6, 16)

Instead of the Cato mentality, which would destroy and says "We will not," let us honestly ask for and walk in the old paths, as our fathers did.—"the faith once delivered to the saints," and "earnestly contend for it!"

Dr. E. F. Klug  
Concordia Theological Seminary  
Springfield, Illinois

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With their generous support many of its friends have made the publication of *Affirm* possible.

You also can help defray its cost by contributing in any amount to:

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## What HCM MEANS . . .

(Continued from Page 19)

dead, blind people are not miraculously cured with mud made of spital, and seas do not part.

3) *Some parts of Scripture* are merely legend. The life and death of great men are generally associated with strange happenings. Note Peter's walking on the water. At Jesus' death we are told of an earthquake and tombs opening. Such things as these are not true but are additions, used only to make a point.

4) *As Biblical writers* attempted to state eternal, spiritual and divine things in the language of time, matter and humanity, they resorted to myth. The Creation account, the Temptations of Jesus, the Transfiguration, the Virgin Birth, are a few examples.

*Can my students ever be certain about what their God has to say to them? Can they be assured of a Savior who loves them, who died and rose again for them? I think not.*

Children will learn, either directly or indirectly, to distrust Scripture. They will never be sure what to believe, what parts are true and factual and what parts are not. They will not come to know and love a physically resurrected Lord, for such a thing as a physical resurrection could not have happened. Scripture says what the historical critic wants it to say.

*In my classroom the Historical-Critical Method would destroy a) the authority of Scripture and b) Jesus as a resurrected Savior. What more is left? According to this method, I and my students are now our own authorities. We shall decide what Scripture has to say to us. We will have to study Scripture as we might a fable. We will look for the moral but will not take the story itself literally.*

Proverbs 30,5a says very clearly: "Every word of God proves true." Verse 6 warns: "Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you, and you be found a liar."

David C. Jording  
Teacher, Grade Six  
St. Paul's Lutheran School  
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

## Abortion and Incarnation . . .

(Continued from Page 14)

Such people probably did not intend to deny a part of the doctrine of our Lord's Incarnation. BUT THEY DID!

Sincere Christians want to be led by sincere pastors and teachers who have pledged themselves to the Scriptures and the Confessions. Holy Scripture and the Book of Concord are clear on the humanity and personality of life in the womb. To claim that we are "bound" to the Scriptures and the Book of Concord on one hand, and then discard such clear evidence as cited above is playing games with God's Word and with the Christian faith. That faith, according to the Athanasian Creed, must be kept "whole and undefiled" or we face the peril of destroying that faith and "perishing everlastingly."

Human life, from the moment of conception, is important. The doctrine of the Incarnation of our Lord is even more important. Let's defend both clearly and forcefully from Scriptures and the Creeds.

The Rev. Carl L. Bornmann, Pastor  
St. Philip's Lutheran Church  
Detroit, Michigan

## Affirmation of Goals: LC-MS

*The following is a consensus statement of many conservative groups within the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.*

WE hereby state our endorsement of the doctrinal position of the Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions and the Constitution of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. To that end we affirm and support the following actions as goals to be achieved by the 50th convention of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod at New Orleans, Louisiana, so that our church can get back to the primary mission her Lord has given her: the preaching of the Gospel of Christ.

A. Loyalty to God's Word requires us to affirm the following positive goals:

1. *Re-elect* President J. A. O. Preus and elect only such other nominees who do support the confessional position of our synod.
2. *Surrender* to the authority of God's holy Word by subscription to the document, *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*.
3. *Endorse* the proposal that synodical resolutions on doctrinal matters be accepted as binding and worthy of enforcement.
4. *Affirm* the authority of "all Scripture" by rejecting "Gospel Reductionism."
5. *Re-affirm* our synod's church polity and uphold the office of the president of Synod.
6. *Support* a change in procedure for election of synodical seminary and college presidents, so that the church no longer be deprived of proper control of her institutions of higher learning.

B. The endorsement of the above points also demands the following action:

1. *Insist* that Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, be effectively and immediately disciplined for doctrinal laxity and for the sake of the true mission of Christ's church.
2. *Reject* the Historical-Critical Method as a valid interpretive method for Biblical studies.
3. *Change* our relationship to LCUSA, which uses our resources to change our theology.

4. *Suspend* formal fellowship with the American Lutheran Church until the doctrinal consensus necessary for fellowship has been achieved, as required by the Word of God. (Obvious differences of doctrine presently prevail on such doctrines as Inspiration of Scripture, Ordination of Women, etc.)

5. *Resist* any attempts at collegiality or the transfer of synodical executive authority to the Council of District Presidents. (We do not need a college of cardinals in the Lutheran church.)

6. *Reject* the ordination of women into the ministry as contrary to the directives of Scripture.

The Doctrinal Concerns Program  
of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

### Baker Book Available

Copies of "Watershed at the Rivergate" by Rev. Thomas Baker are available from the author at 216 S. Lakeview, Sturgis Michigan (49091) for \$1.00 each. A 1971 graduate of the St. Louis Seminary and now a pastor, he has collected a vast number of interrelated words and actions which "tell it like it is."

Layman C. A. Swanson offers a *Forward* in which he says that the book helps expose such myths that the liberal drift in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has occurred without liberal help, that current liberal political activity is in response to that of conservatives and that the label "moderate" is something other than liberals.

The sub-title of the book "1,400 vs. 250,000" refers to the number of signatures of the liberal document, "Declaration of Determination" and the number of endorsements attached to the conservative letter *Crossroads* which supports the *Statement of Confessional and Scriptural Principles* by President J. A. O. Preus. It is a story of a small minority of rebels against the great majority of Synod who seek to be faithful to God's Word. Pastor Baker tells how the controversy centers on two irreconcilable, divergent, opposing and contradictory understanding, theologies, doctrines of the Bible (indeed, the Gospel itself) and the Lutheran Confessions. Revealing the reality of doctrinal change that has gone on in Synod, he shows in the three sections of the book how and why Synod is divided.

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"I believed,  
and therefore have  
I spoken"  
2 Cor. 4:13

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## Postscript on New Orleans

I suppose I have a few credentials for offering some reaction to the New Orleans convention now after some of the dust has settled. For sixteen years I have been a professor at Concordia Seminary where much attention has been concentrated during the last four years. I was furthermore a member of convention floor Committee 2 on Doctrinal Matters and Church Relations. For a week this committee interviewed all who wished a hearing, listened at open hearings and prepared some 56 resolutions for convention consideration, although only about six ever reached the convention floor—some sort of record, I am sure. Throughout the next week, the week of the convention, I sat with blue badge delegates, observing at close hand how people on both sides felt and behaved as they sought to grapple with issues and get their way. But perhaps my chief credential lies in the fact that for the past four years I have belonged to the faculty minority of five who believed that the investigation of Concordia Seminary was called for and was eminently fair; who believed that there were serious doctrinal differences at the Seminary, differences which cried for faculty discussion and resolution which, sad to say, never took place; and who know by experience as well as any delegate at New Orleans what it means to be beaten, overruled, ignored and silenced. If this last credential doesn't provide me with objectivity, it at least indicates that I am truly empathetic to a minority, even a large, vocal one; for I know how it feels to lose and lose again.

But what can one say that has not already been said? There is no point in rehearsing the planned disturbances, the poor grace, the divisive tactics, the unconscionable delaying actions which prevented, often in the name of freedom of discussion, scores of crucial resolutions from reaching the convention floor, and the repeated *ad populum* appeals of that minority of delegates who have chosen for themselves the euphemistic but dubious (see Revelations 3:16) title "moderates." Nor is it profitable to dwell on the thoroughly unpleasant character of a church convention which to me can only be called nightmarish.

I shall restrict my comments to two remarks made publicly by the President of Concordia Seminary, remarks which represent, I think, an awful lot of people who have sided strongly with the faculty at Concordia Seminary, remarks which I believe were made sincerely, but which are utterly and tragically wrong and misleading.

The first remark was made on the convention floor when it became apparent that the majority of the delegates believed that false doctrine was taught at Concordia Seminary and intended to say so in no uncertain terms (See Resolution 3-09). The President of the Seminary complained, "The faculty of Concordia Seminary has not been heard

from." This statement implies a) that the faculty has not been given opportunity to express itself as to its doctrinal position, and/or b) people have just not listened to the faculty. The statement is the most incredible thing I have ever heard.

FOR years the faculty has been heard from—loud and clear. Ask our hundreds of recent graduates, and they will tell you. The investigation of the theology and life of the Seminary was a very definite attempt, overwhelmingly endorsed by Synod at Milwaukee, to hear from the faculty what each one of us believed, taught and confessed on sensitive and fundamental doctrinal issues. When they publicly protested the investigation, condemned the *Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, rejected at great length the *Report of the investigation* (See *Fact Finding or Fault Finding*) issued their own confession entitled *Faithful to our Calling, Faithful to our Lord*, when they went hither and yon throughout the synod explaining and promoting the Historical-Critical Method and their other peculiar teachings and did the same at workshops and in cassettes and every possible way, the faculty was again heard from, again and again.

Were the people, then, the pastors and laymen and laywomen not listening? That's just the point: they were listening, carefully, deliberately. And at the convention once again the delegates listened patiently and courteously. It is difficult to conceive of a group of people receiving a wider and fairer and longer hearing than the faculty of Concordia Seminary received from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The church listened perceptively, critically and with understanding—and for this reason the delegates were able confidently to state that they did not agree with certain things they heard and did not want those things taught at Concordia Seminary. For the President of Concordia Seminary or anyone or any group to interpret what happened at New Orleans in any other way can only be construed as unrealistic, hopelessly naive or even downright arrogant.

THERE was never the slightest question but that the faculty of Concordia Seminary was heard from. The question now pressing for answer after New Orleans is, will the synod and her officers get a hearing at Concordia Seminary? Will the faculty listen now after the synod has spoken with such definiteness and finality? The public response of the Seminary President to Synod's action at New Orleans presages little hope that this will happen.

The second significant statement deserving some comment

(Continued on Page 3)

# A Parish Pastor Looks At New Orleans

THE assignment is, "How did the New Orleans Convention look to you as a parish pastor?"

To one who at previous conventions has been a floor committee member and thus saw little of the convention floor and as a delegate with the burden of decisions often didn't see the forest for the trees, the visitor's gallery was a real treat.

With some objectivity one could watch the concentration, the weighing, the agonizing and the praying, the pain and the pleasure.

Like others, a pastor saw, first of all, a *doctrinal* convention. This pleased him, for he knows that doctrine precedes practice, faith comes ahead of life, policy ahead of action. He listened to a church which said that the compass heading must be right before there is further traveling. To ride off simultaneously in all doctrinal directions means the death of the church. We cannot be at our task of obedience to the Lord's "Preach the Gospel" if there is any question—and there was—on which Gospel we are to preach.

With unwavering determination, albeit somewhat sadly, the church said that other matters should and could wait. One can sympathize with a floor committee that labors long over 24 resolutions and only gets four of them to the floor. But its members understood. A parish pastor saw a convention which had its priorities straight.

Thus, in a major decision the church restudied Lutheranism's history and reasserted its right, and at times its obligation, to take a stand on what it hears Scripture to be saying. As the need arises, doctrinal statements can and must be formulated and adopted.

A following resolution considered a *Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* which the church has studied and evaluated for a year and a half. The church gave new and important stature in the framework of our doctrinal stand.

A parish pastor also noted in his church a new-found willingness to speak. The president's opening address had stated clearly that to delay would be to capitulate. The delegates were equal to the challenge. They knew that they either had to take the heat or get out of the kitchen. They stayed and they took the heat.

In the life-time of one parish pastor, these were the best informed lay delegates he has ever seen. They knew the issues. Long before the convention they had asked: what's going on in our church? They were determined to get answers. At New Orleans they sorted out fact from fancy, oratory from issues. They were cajoled, berated, and threatened. Efforts were made to make them feel either incompetent or guilty. They stood fast.

A parish pastor saw some bad behavior. Parliamentary procedure, meant to be an orderly method for expediting business, at times apparently was used as a tool to confuse, hamstring, and delay. Those who pled loudest for tolerance at times showed little. Those who spoke most about reconciliation at times engaged in acts which made it least likely. Some of the convention's theatrics moved one delegate, in the name of many, to voice the hope that if delegates could not behave as Christians they might at least behave as gentlemen. Even though it was a minority which used such tactics, one felt ashamed.

ALL of which causes one to wonder about a whole new convention structure. Or can no change of structure work, if some men wish to disturb a church meeting like this?

A parish pastor also heard the church speak in the elections. It was said that 140 out of 144 posts went to those holding Synod's historic position. Whatever the figure, the language was clear. The church wanted not only to have its say at New Orleans, but it also wanted to be sure that the church's policies would be carried out on a day-to-day basis by its standing boards and commissions. It placed men on the control boards of its various secondary schools who gave promise of seeing to it that our future pastors and teachers preach and teach the faith of our fathers. Permissiveness, said the church, is no longer the order of the day.

The church by its elections said that it wants professors at its colleges and seminaries who will teach what Synod wants taught. If some sincerely find they cannot teach this, they should go elsewhere. The church binds no individual's conscience as to what he believes, for that is between him and God. But the church does hold him accountable for what he teaches.

The church got its major tasks done by a firm hold on "first things first." It reaffirmed its doctrinal stand. It did what it could to assure that this will be maintained throughout Synod. All of which a parish pastor was glad to see and hear.

But sitting in the gallery at New Orleans, one also thinks of the days ahead. As he listens, he knows it will soon be time to leave this somewhat weird convention world and head back to the prairie congregation to which the Lord called him many years ago. What then?

HE goes back with the joy of the delegate who said, "I can go home knowing that my church again really stands for something." That this "something" is the church's century-long stand on the Word of God and the Confessions warms the heart, puts spring in his step, and sends him on his way as joyous as a Psalm.

The parish pastor also thinks of his own District. He knows that a majority of the District Presidents have liberal tendencies. He saw efforts at New Orleans to change the Council of Presidents from an arm of Synod's President in their respective geographical areas to a sort of college of cardinals. The convention said no. The function of our District Presidents shall stay as it is.

Did these men really hear what the church said? Will the weak ones be strengthened? Will those who have opposed Synod's stand rethink their position? Will they truly be servants of the church? It remains to be seen. They must stand for election in 1974 at their respective District conventions. The Districts have a right to ask questions, and they are entitled to clear and clean answers. This, too, a parish pastor thinks about at New Orleans as the convention days lengthen and the hour grows late.

In one sentence, how did the convention look to a parish pastor? Answer: I must and now I can be about my Father's business.

The Rev. Ewald J. Otto, Pastor  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Quincy, Illinois

# Convention Afterthoughts of a Synodical Vice-President

AS all in the church know by this time, the 50th Convention of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in New Orleans devoted itself in large part to matters of doctrine, particularly to theological issues and doctrinal differences which had arisen in our church body. Delegates adopted a number of important resolutions—among them these: 2-12, regarding the synod's right and responsibility to formulate, adopt, and require the upholding of formal doctrinal statements; 3-01, declaring a *Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* a formal and comprehensive synodical statement of belief; and 3-09, recognizing and repudiating various teachings of the St. Louis seminary faculty majority (and others in the church) as false doctrine. The synod, in accord with Scripture and the Confessions and in good Lutheran tradition, spoke clearly and unequivocally to theological questions currently debated in the church, confessed salient truths of the divine Word, identified and rebuked error, pointed the way to settlement of the doctrinal controversy in our midst, set in motion disciplinary and reconciling procedures which under God will make for unity and peace in the synodical fellowship.

A synodical convention's determined confrontation of our theological problems had to come. That it came decisively and that the Word of the Lord triumphed in the decisions at New Orleans as it did, is a remarkable gift of God's grace to the synod, a blessing for which we may give heart-deep thanks and praise to God. At the same time we ought all pray that the resolutions passed in July will be implemented appropriately by synodical officers across the country and will be honored and upheld in the church generally, so that we will not have received this grace of God in vain.

THERE are some in the church who disapprove the 1973 convention's occupation with doctrinal concerns, who have expressed themselves to the effect that the synod should have passed these matters by and concentrated on what they regard as "the real work of the church"—evangelism, missionary outreach, disciple-making amongst the nations. Now, it is to be regretted, indeed, that more convention time could not be given to these and other vital subjects. Scores upon scores of worthy resolutions drawn up by the numerous floor committees could not even be presented to the convention because of the lengthy consideration of doctrinal matters. The "real work" of the church, we should note, however, is the *full* assignment Jesus gave his followers in the Great Commission, and this has a *double* thrust; the Savior asks God's people in every New Testament generation with the Spirit's help (1) to win men, women, and children from all nations for God's Kingdom through Gospel testimony and baptism and then (2) to teach them (those won) all things whatsoever He, Jesus, has commanded. The "real work" of the church is *both* evangelizing the nations *and* carefully indoctrinating the saints, fostering their sanctification. Because of the growing confusion about certain doctrines in the church, it was necessary that the synod take sufficient time to enunciate its understanding of Biblical teaching in the controverted areas, to offer an official position on disputed points, so that in the future the church might without hindrance promote our people's observance of all things the Lord has taught. Had the synod taken hold of its doctrinal difficulties years earlier, settlement doubtless would have come more speedily; those holding minority viewpoints would probably not have numbered in the hundreds, as they did at New Orleans, and through prolonged

discussion have held up the adoption of necessary doctrinal resolutions normated by Scripture and the Confessions. Perhaps it will be possible at the next convention in Los Angeles, which is to have as its theme the promotion of evangelism activity, to give the first thrust of the Great Commission the emphasis and attention it assuredly deserves.

ANOTHER misconception should be laid to rest. This is the opinion voiced by some that the church's devotion to teaching the Word in purity and to doctrinal discipline—as evidenced at New Orleans—inevitably involves with it a certain lack of concern for, and a reprehensible lovelessness toward, the brethren. Such is not the case at all. To be sure, those engaged in contending for the faith "once delivered" may at times be guilty of lapses in love toward others. If this occurred at the convention, it is to be regretted, and offenders against the law of brotherly love ought repent. It should be recognized, however, that a devout Christian's striving to have the truth of God's Word upheld is chiefly actuated by his love for the Lord. This is the supreme love enjoined by the First Table of the Law (which precedes the Second) in which God directs every believer as his primary duty to "love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind." This love leads the Christian (among other things), as the Third Commandment indicates, to hold God's Word sacred and seek to have it proclaimed in its truth and purity. To manifest this love in such a manner in no way precludes loving the brethren; in fact, the love of God also energizes the love for fellows in the faith—and surely it is a mark of love for the brother to labor for the preservation of God's truth to him in its purity and power! God-pleasing zeal for the truth is in large measure prompted by solicitous concern for those who may be affected to their detriment by false teaching, which always destroys spiritual strength and leads to the loss of spiritual life itself.

Dr. Walter A. Maier, Fourth Vice-President, LC-MS,  
Springfield, Illinois

## Postscript . . . (Continued from Page 1)

was made by the President of Concordia Seminary to newsmen after the convention had passed Resolution 3-09. Speculating about whether moderates might start a new church body, the President said (according to RNS) that the convention action prompted "a solidification of the 45 percent of the Church that is clearly represented here." This statement is both true and false. There is no doubt that what was almost a complete solidification of liberal forces in Missouri prior to the convention is now a fact of life and right out in the open. But the assertion that this rather heterogenous coalition with its rather heterogeneous theology and proffered leadership represents 45 percent of our Church is again utterly incredible. And it is tragic—tragic for the minority itself—that such a gross exaggeration should be made and apparently believed. For this minority, which has in the past captured many chairs of theology and high positions in Synod, has never been able to capture the minds and hearts of Missouri's people. Go out into our congregations, meet the thousands of well indoctrinated, pious lay people, and you will know this is so. The now solidified moderate coalition has not bothered to do this. Its members have not listened to the people, to their expressions of faith, to their desires for our synod. Sometimes I wonder if they are able to listen. Do the moderates,

(Continued on Page 8)



# Reflections of a Convention Page

**H**UGE, fast-paced, spectacular, historic, tremendous, painful, joyous, edifying—these adjectives present only a glimpse of the panorama that was the New Orleans Convention. On each business day, the Rivergate Exhibition Center became a melting pot for people of differing cultural and social backgrounds, and, at the same time, a holy homogeneity where the bride of Christ did her Lord's business.

This convention gripped the attention of observers around the world. Greater New Orleans was saturated with news of what went on at the foot of Canal Street. Media, regional and global, were well-represented at convention hall. The reason for all this excitement and fascination seems quite simple to me: God made history at New Orleans.

Prior to this convention, no denomination had successfully abandoned a course which would have led it away from bold confession of Scriptural inerrancy. Before the 50th regular assembly, Lutheranism-at-large had been caught up in a false understanding of the relationship between Gospel and Scripture. Prior to New Orleans, Christian theology had started using an almost-Gnostic concept of revelation, which went hand-in-hand with a soteriology based wholly on inner faith, apart from the historical guarantees of Scripture.

**B**UT, when Missouri returned to her geographic "starting point," at the place where the Saxon immigrants first stood on American soil, she also went to her theological starting point, and stood firm on the Word of God. Under the theme, "Ever, Only, All For Thee," the majority of the delegates openly showed their position to the world by passing a number of key resolutions, especially 3-01, "To Adopt A Statement." Moreover, they made this mighty witness in a remarkable spirit of brotherly love and restraint from personal attack on others. The real story of any convention, however, goes beyond business sessions, resolutions, and parliamentary procedure, important as they are. People make conventions, and as a page, I saw and met many people.

There were old friends and acquaintances, some of whom I hadn't seen for years. There were famous people, about whom I'd heard, and whose books I had read. It was quite exciting to talk and work with them. And, of course, I had the opportunity to establish new friendships with many interesting fellow-saints from all over the country: seminary students, pastors, teachers, and laymen.

**A** highlight of my own "convention experience" was the worship, especially the two mass services, one of which was the convention opening on Friday, July 6. Pastor Guido Merkens delivered an inspiring, enjoyable, and comprehensive address with the assembly's theme as his title. On Sunday, July 8, the 125th Anniversary celebration was climaxed with a moving 90 minute service, at which Dr. W. Harry Krieger exhorted the synod, "For Mercy's Sake, Hold Fast—But Keep Moving." While less elaborate, Saturday's opening devotion was every bit as meaningful, as President Preus compared our situation in 1973 to that of Jeremiah in 627 B.C. and the Saxon immigrants in 1839, asking the pointed question, "Will we be faithful?"

The most uplifting aspect of the eight days, for me, was the attitude displayed by my fellow teen-agers. Some of them served as convention pages, some distributed *Affirm* at the door in the morning, some ran errands, and some did all these things. As the days unfolded, I saw my friends

developing deep interests in the Church and her Confessions. They gave serious consideration to rather complex theological issues. They found out just how big Synod is, and how many boards, commissions, and dedicated people are needed to make it all work, under the Lord's guidance and blessing. They showed fantastic patience and zeal, often volunteering for double-duty when unexpected page shortages arose. Most important of all, however (and the reason why they gladly showed interest and did work) was their apparent growth in faith.

**P**AGES did a variety of jobs at the convention. Working with the Committee on Elections, we stuffed ballots inside envelopes, distributed them on the floor, and got to know members of the election committee in the process. We delivered messages to delegates, advisors, and the chair. Two of our girls worked full-time on the platform, assisting the Chairman, Secretary, and parliamentarians. The most unpopular assignment was the somewhat boring task of guarding the "press room" door, making certain only those with proper credentials gained access.

A page's finest hour, however, was the time he spent on the floor, for one could sense the electricity among delegates and advisors.

These young people were having a fantastic educational experience. Many Missourians never see a synodical convention in their lives. These teenagers, however, were blessed with having seen and participated in such a meeting, one of extreme importance to the Church. The things they saw, the contacts they made, and the lessons they learned form a treasury of memories to which they can refer for the rest of their lives.

On the basis of her observations, one young lady concluded, "The Church has a long way to go." That is true. But, in a sense, she is already there, possessing the greatest gift of all in Jesus Christ, her Lord, Who bought and blessed her, and will one day give her final victory and rest.

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# Healing The Wounds

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I also saw and felt tears, shed in dismay and sorrow by delegates who could not believe what they were seeing—a minority group so intent on having their own way that they were no longer willing to listen to or abide by the decision of a church body they had once sworn to support. I stood next to an advisory delegate who, in response to a statement made from the floor, suddenly started to shout the phrase, "Erect the gallows!" The lines of anger etched on his face were frightening to see.

Yes, many wounds were inflicted, some very deep and painful. Much has been said since that time concerning the healing process which must now take place. How should this be brought about?

In selecting a healing balm it is first necessary to analyze and examine the nature of the wound which has been inflicted. Basically, we are dealing with two types. The first is that which was brought about as a result of a sharp exchange of words or actions between individuals. The second type is one suffered by the church body through individual or group actions.

IN regard to the first, the healing ointment is that which has so often been recommended since the convention. The wound is clean and fresh; therefore, we need the suture of the Gospel to draw the two sides together. Healing will then take place if the salve of repentance and forgiveness is liberally applied from both sides. This is the type of action which must take place between individual Christians. It is a way of saying, "Brother or sister, I have heard you and though I may not agree, I can understand your actions in the light of the conditions which existed and I do forgive you."

There is a second type of wound for which this same remedy has been suggested. However, in this case healing will not result. In fact, the condition will probably get worse. This second type of wound is not clean, in fact it resembles a boil in many respects. It is one which has been with us for a long time, and is severely infected.

The bacteria that brought it about is called the Historical-Critical Method (HCM), and it was carried into the body of our church already years ago. Nurtured in the seminary classroom the HCM bacteria started to multiply, and soon infected other parts of the body.

Before long a minor irritation began to make itself felt, particularly in the location of the St. Louis Seminary. Questions were asked of those who had been given the responsibility for guarding the health of the body. The answers received always indicated that there was no illness present. Instead, it was made to appear that those making inquiries were overly-concerned hypochondriacs with vivid imaginations. In other words, the pain was merely psychosomatic.

FOUR years ago a new individual was given diagnostic responsibilities for the body. He also received queries con-

cerning the irritation now becoming an infection sensitive to the touch. He listened to the concerns and decided that a reliable diagnosis was a must. A team of highly skilled individuals was formed. They probed the infection, drawing samples, from its interior. Their findings verified earlier suspicions. The HCM bacteria were indeed abundantly present, and unless something was done, would soon infect the entire body and would either weaken or destroy it.

At this point the infection erupted into a full fledged boil. This was analyzed by other diagnostic agencies such as the CTCR, and again found to contain the HCM bacteria. These findings were gathered together and presented to the chief surgeon, Synod itself.

Amid cries of anguish, the wound was fully opened up at New Orleans and the infection exposed for all to see. After much patient deliberation, the verdict was given: "The HCM bacteria are indeed harmful and must be removed. Examine all irritations for possible infection."

The responsibility for this work was then placed in the hands of specialists working in various parts of the body. A tool, called the *Statement* was given to each board to aid in the diagnosis.

Now there are those who advocate suturing the wound with the Gospel without touching the HCM bacteria. In fact, they claim that the bacteria has every right to be present, for it is really quite harmless.

If this advice is followed, healing will not take place. A boil is never healed by lancing it and then immediately binding the edges together. The source of infection must first be removed. If it isn't, the second condition will be much worse than the first.

SO it is with our church body. Unless the source is treated, the infection will reappear. This means that the scalpel must dig deep, and screams of anguish are bound to be heard. They may even be convulsive movements within the body. These should not deter us, any more than a doctor is stopped by a whimper of pain while treating a patient who needs his help.

The treatment must be carried out in a two step process. The first step requires the removal of the source of infection, and must be drastic. The second involves the treatment of the surrounding tissue, and here loving care is required. This is the area which has been touched, is inflamed, but not yet infected. Here the balm of forgiveness is called for, so that the bruised tissue may be returned to a healthy condition and again contribute to the well being of the body. Finally, cleansed of infection, anointed with healing oil, the wound is ready to be sutured with the thread of love drawn from the Gospel. Then—and only then—will true healing result.

To carry out this treatment will require courage. Those given the responsibility will have to face the name-calling and other intimidating methods commonly employed in large, well planned demonstrations. Threats of legal action may be heard frequently. Yet the task must be completed, if the infection is to be removed and healing brought about.

May God give us the strength to accomplish the task in order that we may again be about the Father's business!

Richard Korthals  
Arcadia, Michigan

## The Editorial Group

The Rev. William T. Eggers    Dr. Walter A. Maier  
Richard G. Korthals    The Rev. Ewald J. Otto

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# The Laity Views the Convention

## From a Laywoman . . .

THIS is being composed with much misgiving. MOSTLY BECAUSE, I am not the letter and article writer in the family. My husband is.

There are other reasons that I prefer the more silent role. For one thing, I remarked at the convention that I was embarrassed by some of the antics, emotional outbursts and statements of women delegates. I felt then, and still do, that our synod would probably be better served had it not voted women's suffrage.

Yet, though denying a vote to women in the church could be construed as silencing them, I do not feel women need be struck dumb. The Bible does not teach this. Therefore, since a member of the Board of Balance, Inc. asked me to do so, since I have attended the last three conventions as a very interested observer and since much of my life between conventions is devoted to discussing, studying and praying over the issues facing our church, I will speak out.

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How do I—emotional but not ashamed—see this convention? In two ways.

First, I wish that much of it need never have happened. I wish that we could have been spared the spectacle of showing a house divided. That we might have silenced all discord. And that all of our efforts might have been devoted to extending our mission work, expanding our evangelism program, building new additions to the seminaries, making a four year school out of Ann Arbor and otherwise voting (always unanimously) for reaching, teaching and preaching. Especially, I wish that we could have been spared being so much divided from close personal friends of many years. They call themselves "moderates" and we claim to be "conservatives"; yet, others call us "liberals" and fundamentalists, respectively. Yes, I wish we could have been spared all these emotional and really distasteful sights, sounds and experiences.

(Continued on Page 7)

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EACH layman probably has a different view of the "Watershed Convention" in New Orleans. Mine is based on having, perhaps, more than average involvement in the great issues that were confronted at Rivergate. In the late forties and fifties, I had become alarmed at trends of permissiveness, secularism and humanism that were making inroads into the major church denominations. But I did not think it could or would happen to Missouri. In the early sixties, I began to see the signs of this terrible trio creeping into our beloved synod. By the mid-sixties, I was starting to join a tiny band in sounding the alarm. But few were listening. And, even fewer of those who read or heard our warnings felt that they were worthy of much concern and surely not sufficient-ly alarming for them to become involved.

Having been a "working visitor" to the Denver, Milwaukee, and New Orleans Conventions, I think it would appear to be self-evident to any on-the-scene observer that the concern and involvement within our synod have grown tremendously in the past few years. These last three conventions have mirrored this growth. The level of knowledgeable commitment—in the Voting Delegates, the Advisory Delegates and the Registered Visitors—has been plain to see. So much so that after New Orleans much of the media—some with touches of disdain and dismay, others with tinges of admiration and hope—concluded that for the first time in history a major denomination seems to have turned back toward an orthodox and conservative theology even after inroads of "progressive" doctrine had established firm beachheads.

WHILE my evaluation of this Watershed convention reflects my strong bias for the orthodox and official position of LCMS, it is hoped that two things will be self-evident. First, my participation in study, discussion, prayer groups wrestling with our problems has been heavy and these have not reduced my convictions to lukewarmness. Second, the facts upon which I draw a few conclusions relative to the future are available to all—of whatever persuasion—who care to observe results and read the data which can be drawn from this hot week of July in southern Louisiana.

First some facts:

1. The nomination votes (for President and 1st Vice President) that came from the congregations revealed that:
  - a. Less than 10 percent expressed preference for liberal (or as they were called "moderate") candidates.
  - b. A bit over 30 percent voted for "neutrals."
  - c. Over 60 percent (and, please remember, these were expressions from about two-thirds of Synod's congregations) voted for strongly conservative candidates.
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(Continued on Page 7)

# The Laity Views the Convention

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# A Lay Woman . . . (Continued from Page 6)

there is a second way to see these conventions. If we look into and through Scriptures in viewing the happenings at New Orleans, we find other, more comforting, sights, and experiences. We see a synod earnestly seeking to sound the will—and willing to face the world's ridicule do so rather than ignoring our growing differences until they become so large they would engulf us. We hear earnest arguments and, while some of the accompanying tactics are mental and unwanted, we detect a growing-in-the-faith. For, to make those arguments, many eyes have studied the Word, to scan the Confessions and have reviewed our documents. (Would we have searched as diligently if we had learned as well without these "problems"?) And the experiences of a convention in turmoil are not all painful. In this turmoil, we are beginning to re-establish the surety of peace, the Source of unity, the Source of joy and the Source of power.

WE surely don't have peace, unity, joy and power in man's abilities, in man's love, in man's nature and in man's abilities. Whether you feel that I see this convention emotionally or logically, I have come to this conclusion. I believe we are witnessing imperfect people, some of whom pray much and work little, others who work much and pray little and some who pray much and work much. When more of us become a part of the last grouping, we are apt to receive more of that peace, unity, joy and power that can only come from the Source. I hope, God willing, to see more confidence at the next convention that LCMS has submitted as the only rule and norm of faith. And, if the next or subsequent conventions indicate that we have not reduced our differences in our synod (but have merely hidden them from view), I expect we may have to give serious consideration to the future steps we will take. But I'll never be ashamed of being (or having been) a Lutheran where doctrine is considered seriously. Seriously enough for us to get logically and emotionally involved. Seriously enough, even, for me to accept this invitation to speak out.

Connie Swanson  
Cincinnati, Ohio

# A Layman . . . (Continued from Page 6)

3. The liberal minority of delegates could not control but were able to delay the work of the convention. This was because almost all of the "neutrals" had to vote with the conservatives to get the necessary two-thirds to cut off debate.
4. As the issues were debated (by excellent advocates of both sides) the neutrals became more and more drawn to the conservative side. One of several examples was on Doctrinal Resolution 2-12. After two hours debate—over a period of two days—the vote was 63 percent FOR. On the elections and the less debated (yet controversial) issues, the FOR votes normally ranged from 53 to 57 percent.
5. There was no sign of let-up from the liberal minority in promoting their persons and positions. On the last election of the convention, they managed to vote in their (Lucking and Frey) candidate on the Board of Missions. And in the waning hours of the convention (with the vote count down 20 per-

cent, the delegates tired and no time to have the issues receive the proper debate) there were two important issues left in a kind of limbo. These were the ALC Fellowship and LCUSA matters. And many others were not even introduced from the podium to the assembled delegates.

Now, for some conclusions:

- A. The liberals are much better organized and more adept at "politics" since they were able to get about a third of their delegates elected from a grass roots that is less than 10 percent committed to their views (See Facts 1, 2 and 3.)
- B. As the issues become known, the "right" (i.e., conservative) doctrine draws more and more defenders. (See Fact 4.)
- C. There has been a battle won but "the good fight" continues. There is not yet a shred of evidence that the liberal minority have recognized the conservative mandate as reason for them to submit to the vast majority and begin to honor and uphold Synod's doctrinal resolutions. (See Fact 5.)

Which leads to these recommendations:

- I. The conservatives—both active and neutral—had better recognize that they must become involved. The liberals are not going to stop being political creatures. And the more involved the entire church members become, the more they vote their true convictions rather than allowing a vocal minority to rule. (See Conclusions A, B and C.)
- II. The media—whether sad or delighted in their observations—made a qualified statement that Missouri seems to have made an unprecedented turn. All members—at least those who represent 90 percent of LCMS—had better pray and work a lot harder or the media statement after a future convention may have an unqualified opinion that goes something like this:

AT THE NEW ORLEANS CONVENTION, LCMS MEMBERS LEARNED HOW THEY HAD ALMOST LOST THEIR CHURCH TO A SMALL MINORITY. THEY LEARNED THAT FROM A 10 PERCENT BASE THE LIBERALS HAD GAINED 90 PERCENT OF THE FACULTY POSITIONS OF THEIR LARGEST SEMINARY AND WERE ELECTING ONE-THIRD OF THE DELEGATES TO THEIR CONVENTIONS. DESPITE THAT LESSON, LCMS SPENT THE NEXT TWO YEARS IN PASTORAL DISCUSSIONS. THE ADMONISHMENTS WENT MOSTLY TO THOSE CONSERVATIVES WHO ENDEAVORED TO OPENLY ENGAGE IN CHURCH POLITICS. AT THE CALIFORNIA CONVENTION JUST CONCLUDED, AND WITH A LIBERAL MINORITY OF ONLY 40 PERCENT, A LIBERAL-MODERATE COALITION JUST ABOUT WON EVERYTHING IN SIGHT. THE RIGHT TURN THAT SEEMED TO BE TAKEN AT NEW ORLEANS WAS, IN RETROSPECT, ONLY A SHORT DETOUR. . . .

(Continued on Page 8)

**Postscript . . .** (Continued from Page 3)

for instance, really believe that 45 percent of Missouri's people would refuse to express their agreement with the *Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*? Perhaps 10 percent might refuse, and then only because some were frightened or confused about the *Statement's* function or purpose.

At New Orleans the now solidified moderate minority lost more than just the presidency of the synod, more than just scores of other elective offices, more than the seminary issue. They lost the people—permanently. For now the people know the facts and understand the issues. And they are willing to act decisively. And as this knowledge and understanding increases and spreads through the synod the solidified minority will be revealed to be quite unrepresentative after all and will decrease in size and effectiveness.

Ninety years ago a controversy concerning the *sola gratia* principle (salvation by grace alone) raged among American Lutherans. The leaders of the Norwegian Synod, then affiliated with Missouri, decided that laymen should not be troubled by the controversy. The issues were too complicated and the lay people would not understand. In a few years that synod was split down the middle and lost one third of its membership. Missouri leaders shared the issues in the controversy with the lay people in the pages of *Der Lutheraner* and the *Lutheran Witness*. Missouri lost only a handful of pastors and retained its Lutheran character. Today a controversy over the *sola scriptura* principle (the inspiration, authority and inerrancy of Scripture) rages among American Lutherans. Again the issues have been brought out into the open and Missouri lay people have responded with conviction and decision.

Many will no doubt speculate about who are the heroes of the New Orleans Convention. To me the heroes—if such a word is appropriate—were those approximately 575 voting delegates who stood fast, delegates no doubt better informed than at any previous convention in our century, little known and unsung delegates many of whom will never attend another convention, delegates who did rather little speaking but did a lot of reading and praying and sitting and listening, delegates who were open to the truth and to honest persuasion but remained unintimidated, unswayed and unconfused by the relentless barrage of parliamentary maneuvering, and other unpleasant pressures, delegates who knew that Missouri was at the crossroads and must act decisively under God or lose her Lutheran and evangelical identity. These are the ones who, faithful to a precious heritage, motivated by love for the Gospel and committed to the truth,

made the agonizing but necessary and right decisions that will mark Missouri's course under God for many years to come. These were God's instruments in keeping Missouri from becoming just another denomination or sect. These are the ones who deserve the thanks of millions of Lutherans and Christians throughout the world.

Dr. Robert D. Preus, Concordia Seminary  
St. Louis, Missouri

**A Layman . . .** (Continued from Page 7)*Epilog:*

The look ahead will be different if the 90 percent majority work and pray openly and unashamedly. The media, in 1975, could well report:

LCMS, IN 1973, NOT ONLY TOOK THE RIGHT TURN AT THE CROSSROADS BUT WENT INTO HIGH GEAR. MEMBERSHIP, STEWARDSHIP, MISSION AND EVANGELISM ARE CONTINUING TO SHOW IMPRESSIVE GAINS. ENROLLMENT AT ST. LOUIS SEM—DESPITE THE PROBLEMS OF A 90 PERCENT TURNOVER OF FACULTY—CONTINUES TO CLIMB. THERE IS A FELLOWSHIP ESTABLISHED WITH ELS, WELS AND FAL. MANY ALC AND NOT A FEW LCA CONGREGATIONS HAVE APPLIED FOR MEMBERSHIP STATUS IN LCMS. FAL IS TO VOTE THIS COMING FALL ON RETURNING TO LCMS. . . .

C. A. Swanson  
Cincinnati, Ohio

**Future Issues**

Future issues of *Affirm* will carry exciting and important articles on the next two years in Missouri's history, the meaning of discipline in the church, where all American Lutheranism today stands and Missouri's place in Lutheranism, and other articles of significance to developments in the church.

Late during the convention those responsible for it made the decision to continue the publication of *Affirm* for at least several more years. They had many sound and valid reasons for this decision.

*Affirm's* editors hope you will continue to enjoy and profit from *Affirm's* pages. They also trust that your continued support of *Affirm* will in no way be diminished.

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"I believed,  
and therefore have  
I spoken"  
2 Cor. 4:13

## The Next Two Years

ON one of the last days of the New Orleans Convention the people responsible for *Affirm* decided to continue to publish it the next two years.

Events have since proven the wisdom of their decision. They believed that though conservatives had swept the New Orleans elections and had won a number of decisive victories, Missouri's struggle with liberalism would be intensified during the next two years as the church approached its next convention in Los Angeles.

They read the signs correctly.

The liberal gathering in Chicago some weeks ago rejected and defied the doctrinal resolutions of Synod, formally organized, elected a board of directors, plans to engage an executive to promote the liberal cause and will publish liberal promotional material during the months ahead.

With their Chicago decision the liberals highlighted the major fact about Missouri's inner struggle—a fact *Affirm* has long recognized—that though the struggle is, in one major aspect, a political one and though the votes of the delegates to the convention help mold the history of the church every two years, the essential struggle is a theological one, a struggle of two sets of opposing ideas in the church arena, an intellectual contest for and against the great truths of the Word of God.

The conservatives might, for example, win the next five conventions and yet lose Missouri to liberalism because they had not adequately fought the battle of religious ideas. Winning at conventions depends on having enough conservatives as delegates and that, in turn, depends on having enough conservatives throughout the church to elect this kind of delegate.

AND that depends, by God's grace, on continuing to persuade enough people in Missouri that the historic stance of Missouri about the Lord Jesus Christ's atonement and His Word and doctrine is correct.

We must, therefore, sharply define our goals for the next several years. We must pursue them as energetically as God gives us the strength. We must bring to our task the zeal He encourages. And we must use our full intellectual capacity in His cause.

The first of the major conservative goals must be to strengthen, under God, those who accept Jesus as Lord and Redeemer and hold the truths of His Word, as the church has through the ages correctly accepted Him and His Word, and to win back a growing number of Missourians to its historic position.

That is the core task.

The means of doing this are many. Faithful pastors must continue faithfully to preach His Word and to encourage each other as well as the laymen of the Church.

Doctrinal Concern Groups should be undergirded, wherever they are already found, and more of these groups should be created, so that the people of our churches may become fully acquainted with the great issues at stake in Missouri's controversy.

*Affirm* should be used to keep all conservatives more thoroughly informed about the matters which trouble the church. This publication has been privileged to serve as the single and most visible rallying point for the conservative cause.

The second goal: during the months before Los Angeles the conservative boards and officers of Missouri, elected in July, will need to carry out their mandate to reverse whatever gains liberalism has made in Missouri's complex organization. All conservatives will await reports of their actions with great interest. These same boards and officers will also need to strengthen, under God, the conservative work which Missouri, until the most recent times, engaged in.

VITAL too beyond words will be a third goal—the election of conservative officers at the district level next year. Liberal district presidents, wherever possible, hopefully will be retired from office. So will similar men serving the district officially in other capacities.

Moreover, as another article in this issue of *Affirm* spells out in detail, the fourth goal should be that the *Statement* be put to a proper use in our church body—and this may mean admonition of clergy and laymen who teach other than the Word and the *Statement*—and it may in time come to mean more than mere admonition.

Nor can we even dare to hope to complete the work we have started without prayer! We need to ask God's blessing, His direction on all of it, and also His blessing so that those who have shifted to the liberal camp will return to His Word!

We need to pray for the next convention!

Finally, we need to help the conservative cause also with our contributions! The work of *Affirm* and the broader work of Balance, Inc., which publishes *Affirm*, now need your generous help!

Liberalism threatens the Gospel of Redemption in Christ and the very meaning and truth of God's Word! The monies given to support the conservative task are small in comparison with its world-wide importance as well as its importance to each of us.

God bless us all in this great struggle of ideas! God bless Missouri—so she stands firm where she always has stood!

## Church Discipline

**D**ISCIPLINE is an indispensable part of the fabric of life. The family unit depends on it. Schools, if they are to be learning places, cannot function without it. Society, by definition, requires it. The very universe runs on it. A church body, if it is a confessional church must say, "This we believe, confess, teach, and live." That implies discipline.

To this there is common agreement intellectually and theoretically. Concretely the reaction is often different, and for a number of reasons. An age that has permissiveness as its hallmark and "do your own thing" as its motto, breaks out in hives at the very word "discipline."

Then, too, we all like to think that we are the exceptions, that we can "beat the game." Children think there's something great about getting by as long as the folks don't know, but our reformatories testify otherwise. Adults think that rules apply only to others, and our society operates prisons at capacity. In religion, doctrinal laxity poses as "love" and "tolerance," and the result has been called the Protestant blaaah.

Despite the horrendous harvest resulting from a lack of discipline in home, church, and state, the word pretty generally remains a nasty one. Discipline never was and never will be popular. "Discipline, no doubt, is never pleasant" (Hebrew 12:11 NEB). The prophet calling for it is a lonely voice in the wilderness.

Obviously, then, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod was definitely swimming against the current when at its New Orleans convention it called for discipline on all fronts. Discipline was explicit when Synod dealt with the St. Louis Seminary and its president, implicit in its elections and its reassertion of the synodical right and obligation to formulate and adopt doctrinal statements which say, in times of doctrinal confusion and dispute, "This is what we as a church body hear

Scripture saying, this is our synod's doctrinal stand, this is what is to be taught in our schools and preached from our pulpits."

**T**HIS poses a more fundamental question. Where, really, does this thing called discipline come from? Despite liberal opinion, it is not the invention of hard-headed legalists or dour malcontents.

Discipline is of God! The Bible is full of it. Discipline is to start early in life. "Train up a child . . ." "Ye fathers, bring up your children . . ."

The Lord of the church also made discipline basic to the function and to the very existence and life of the church. The risen Christ's first words to the apostolic group Easter evening was, "Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." In Matthew 18 the Lord clearly spells out for the church the procedure to be followed when "thy brother shall trespass."

One would expect, for this reason, that the place of discipline, among those claiming allegiance to God's Word, would be unquestioned in the life of the church established by the God of all authority. One would expect that the correctness of the Missouri Synod's reassertion of its right, responsibility and determination to follow God's will in the matter of church discipline would be obvious.

Yet it is not so obvious to many, and more than a few want no discipline in the church. Consider "The Decline of Discipline," an article in a recent issue of *Dialog* by a Lutheran pastor, Joseph Burgess.

(Continued on Page 6)

## Proclaim— Or Defend?

**W**HAT is the role of the church and its members in relation to the Gospel? The very obvious answer is that we must proclaim it, for that is why God leaves us here on earth. It was Christ himself who commanded us to be his witnesses, who spent his entire life demonstrating the manner in which this task was to be accomplished.

There is, however, another facet to this question which is frequently referred to, and that concerns the matter of defense. A statement made in a recent issue of *Dialog* is typical. Joseph Burgess, in an article entitled "The Decline of Discipline," states the following: "Which leads to the ultimate question: does the Gospel need our protection? Or to put it another way: could we protect the Gospel? Is not the question itself presumptuous? It is the Lord who guards the Gospel. It is the Lord who also watches over the church and promises to protect it against death (Matthew 16:18). Absolute doctrine is an eschatological concept. For us truth remains historical, and our decisions about truth remain historical."

In other words, we should not be concerned about truth, because it changes from day to day. Nor is there any need to get upset about differing doctrines, since they can never be absolute. Leave the defending of the Gospel up to the Lord, and concern yourself only with its proclamation, whatever that may be.

There is just enough truth contained in the quotation to make it dangerous, particularly in regard to the conclusions which are drawn from it. Certainly our Lord guards the Gospel. The precious news of God's redemptive act through his Son Jesus

Christ will never vanish from the face of the earth. Men may ridicule God's Word, they may even try to eradicate it from the face of the earth, but they shall not succeed. The Bible shall be with us until the end of time, for God has so promised.

**T**HE same is true of the Church (spelled with a capital rather than a small c.). Church bodies may come and go, but that invisible body of all true believers shall always be present under God's protection.

But this does not guarantee that the true Gospel shall always be proclaimed. Was not that precisely the reason for the Reformation? The Gospel as written had not disappeared. The Bible was still present, and the words within had remained unchanged. God had remained true to His promise.

What had changed was man's interpretation of that Word. It wasn't a matter of man finding a new truth as he acquired new knowledge. Rather, man had replaced God's immutable truth with his untruth, and as a result the proclamation of the true Gospel was lost. Instead, man listened to a gospel that told him that salvation could be earned through his own efforts.

Martin Luther could have said, "Let God protect His Gospel and defend His Church. I am going to stay in my own little corner of the world and mind my own business." He could have groveled before the papal representatives, pleading his case by stating, "I am sorry that I caused all this disturbance by

(Continued on Page 6)

## On the Status and Use of 'A Statement'

IN eminently Lutheran tradition—a tradition extending back to the time of the Reformation and also embraced in the Missouri Synod since the early days of its history—our church body in convention this July at New Orleans adopted a number of resolutions establishing its official position in various areas of Christian doctrine. One of these was Resolution 3-01, which declared *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* “in all its parts, to be Scriptural and in accord with the Lutheran Confessions, and therefore a formulation which derives its authority from the Word of God and which expresses the Synod’s position on current doctrinal issues.” The convention also indicated the status it wished *A Statement* to hold in the church by pronouncing it to be “a ‘more formal and comprehensive statement of belief’ in the sense of Resolution 5-24 of the 1971 Milwaukee Convention.”

Despite these plain words of Resolution 3-01, questions are being raised by some in the synod at the present time—and misleading interpretations have been offered by others—as to the significance of the church’s adoption of *A Statement* and the use which is to be made of it in our midst. A few remarks of additional clarification, therefore, may be in order; for it is important that the members of Synod achieve as great a measure of unity as possible in the confession of their faith, in the understanding and upholding of the church’s doctrinal position based on the Scriptures.

These points may be noted. (1) In adopting Resolution 3-01 this summer the church pronounced *A Statement*—a formal synodical declaration of belief which applies Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions to current theological issues—the synod’s official doctrinal position on those matters with which *A Statement* deals. (2) *A Statement* will remain, in all its parts, an official expression of our church’s doctrinal position, unless and until the synod itself may become convinced on the basis of Scripture and the Confessions that the doctrinal content of *A Statement* is in error, and the synod may therefore formally adopt changes in the document.

(3) Because *A Statement* is an official expression of doctrine on the matters it treats, Synod expects all its members to “honor and uphold” it, that is, not merely to examine and study it, but to support, act, and teach in accordance with it (cf. Milwaukee convention resolution 2-21, 1971 *Proceedings*, p. 119). (4) In a statement issued by President J. A. O. Preus and concurred in by the Council of Presidents at the end of last July it was indicated that synodical officers will require no special or unusual subscription to *A Statement* of pastors, teachers, or congregations; that synodical officials, however, have the responsibility of honoring and upholding *A Statement* as a synodically adopted doctrinal resolution, “according to the provisions of Milwaukee resolution 5-24.”

(5) The 1971 convention resolution 5-24 distinguishes between

resolutions concerning doctrine formulated and adopted at a convention and more formal statements of belief which are produced by officially authorized groups, and which are then presented to the congregations and clergy of the Synod for study and discussion, and which are subsequently adopted by a synodical convention.

In the case of the more formal statements of belief, resolution 5-24 provides that the synod declare—

1) its position that these statements, together with all other formulations of doctrine, derive their authority from the Word of God which they set forth from the Holy Scriptures;

2) its insistence that the ministry of the church regard these formulations with special seriousness and that those who disagree with these formulations in part or in whole be held to present their objections to them formally to those officials whom the Synod has given the immediate supervision of their doctrine;

3) its conviction that as a result of joint study of the Word of God the Holy Spirit will lead the Synod into all truth, that possible errors in the aforementioned statements will be discovered and corrected, that instances of failure to submit to the clear teaching of the Holy Scriptures will be evangelically dealt with on an individual pastoral basis, and that the Synod can speak with a voice that is Scriptural, Gospel oriented, truly Lutheran, and that we will continue to “walk together” as a true Synod. (1971 *Proceedings*, p. 165)

(6) From the foregoing it is evident that the synod reckons with the possibility that there may be persons in the church who disagree with formally adopted expressions of belief like *A Statement*. If the dissent is for doctrinal reasons, the synod expects the dissenter to attempt to demonstrate on the basis of Scripture and the Confessions the need for changing any formulation supposed to be doctrinally incorrect. The process of dealing with such dissent may well lead to a modification of the statement of belief, but it may also result in the application of the evangelical disciplinary procedures specified in the synodical Constitution and Bylaws. It should be recognized that a separation may regrettably be called for, when neither the dissenter nor the synod is persuaded to alter a respectively held position.

(7) In the July 27 statement issued by President Preus and concurred in by the Council of Presidents it is asserted that “All doctrinal discipline (in the church) will be based on Article II of the synodical constitution, as has been our practice in the past.” The practical import of this assertion is that a brother under discipline will have it pointed out and stressed to him that his erroneous doctrinal position is in violation of confessional and especially of Scriptural teaching (not simply of a synodically adopted doctrinal formulation like *A Statement*). Necessary disciplinary procedures will be administered on the basis of failure to uphold the doctrine of God’s Word. This does not mean, however, that a document like *A Statement* cannot be used at least in the initial stages of admonition to help in the evaluation and dealing with dissent, in the identification and specification of doctrinal error. For such uses, among others, *A Statement* was formulated and officially adopted.

In short, *A Statement* is to be employed in an evangelical manner throughout the synod in an effort to help the church remain faithful to its confessional position. Used in this way, *A Statement* may, under the blessing of God, serve the “conservation and promotion of the unity of the true faith” (*Constitution*, Article III) and aid the synod in the faithful proclamation of the whole counsel of God to its own membership and to the world.

Dr. Walter A. Maier  
Fourth Vice-President, LC-MS  
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**Mark 2:18-20****Friends of the Bridegroom: An Historico-Grammatical Consideration**

*John's disciples and the Pharisees, who were fasting, came to Jesus. "John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast," they told Him. "Why don't Your disciples fast?" Jesus asked them, "Can the bridegroom's friends fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they can't fast. The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and on that day they'll fast." (Beck)*

WITHIN the confines of a single page of print it is not possible to undertake a full discussion of the text given above. What follows is limited, therefore, to five points, each one of which lends itself to a parallel presentation in terms of the Historical-Critical Method, as given in the second half of this article. Following are the five aspects of the text to be discussed: 1) presuppositions; 2) context; 3) form; 4) textual fabric; and 5) meaning.

**1. Presuppositions**

Three major assumptions lie at the base of the Historico-Grammatical Method. They are: 1) God revealed His will and His ways within history, especially by means of His dealings with His people (Israel and the Church); 2) This revelation is offered to us in the once-for-all inspired documents of Scripture, by way of statements formulated in the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek (*koine*) languages; 3) the intended meaning of both the human author and of the Holy Spirit is determined by a careful study of the historical setting and the grammatical (syntactical) construction of the sentences under interpretation.

These presuppositions all point to the cardinal principle of all Biblical interpretation; namely, that the sense of a passage is a single one. There may be a number of applications of what is said in a given passage, but the meaning is one: that is derived from the text as it is given and not from some point in the development of the tradition (oral and/or written) behind the given reading.

**2. Context**

This operating principle necessarily affects the interpreter's understanding of the context of a passage such as the one under consideration. He works with the setting given, in this instance, by Mark. Accordingly, he concludes that the setting for the saying about the "friends of the bridegroom" was a celebration in the home of Levi. If the feasting there began on a Sunday or a Wednesday it was, probably, extended into Monday and/or Thursday, both of which were observed as fast days among observing Jews. This supposed irregularity on the part of Jesus and His disciples brought up the question of the role of fasting in the new age. Jesus responded to the question by anticipating that fasting would remain for some time in the Church as an institution which needed regulation from Him in keeping with Matthew 16:6. We know from the history of the Church that, especially since the end of the second century, the fast before Easter was connected with this saying of Jesus, since it deals with both mourning His death and celebrating His resurrection as the bridegroom of the Church.

**3. Form**

In terms of form, the exegete will note that verses 19a and 19b comprise the kind of Semitic parallelism which could be expected from a Teacher of that age. Verses 19a and 20a as well as 19b and 20b constitute two contrasts. These structural aspects alert the interpreter to the fact that these features derive from the Judaism of that day.

The practitioners of historical criticism tend to call this text a "pronouncement story" on the basis of the assumption that among the Jews of the first century there were tellers of folk tales who used such a form. There is not the slightest evidence of any kind for the existence of such storytellers either in Judaism or in the early church. The notion stems from the distinct possibility that there were such literary artists in the Greek culture of that time. While there does appear to be some evidence for the formal use of folk tales in the Graeco-Roman empire of the first century of our era, the belief that such a form was taken over into the life of the Church defies any kind of validation.

**4. Fabric**

The fourth aspect of our text has to do with its fabric. The historical critic will insist that verses 18-19a can "lay strong claim to reflecting the situation of the historical Jesus." However, 19b and 20 derive from a setting later than Jesus' own ministry. In other words, the fabric of the text is made up of at least two layers of material, which Mark found at hand in a series of conflict stories running from 2:1 to 3:6. Mark made use of what he found because he had a great interest in the death of Jesus. The text, therefore, must be understood also in light of this work of redaction by Mark.

The critic may surmise that the references to the Pharisees and their "disciples" were added to the story during the process of transmission on the grounds that the real conflict of the primitive Church was with Pharisaism.

In the use of the Historico-Grammatical Method the approach to the text, in the matter of its fabric, is a rather different one. The interpreter recognizes the fact that Jesus spoke Aramaic, and that no translation can ever offer precisely what is said in the language originally spoken. At the same time, he will keep in mind the words of John 14:26. There we have Jesus' promise that the Holy Spirit would, after Pentecost, call to mind all the things that Jesus had told His disciples.

Now, it is clear from the four Gospel accounts which we have in our New Testament that this "recalling" on the part of the Spirit was no wooden affair. He did this "calling to mind" in such a way as to offer the apostles and the evangelists the words of Jesus in their expanded sense; that is to say, with the meaning that Jesus intended for the life of His Church through all ages to come. In other words, the exegete will conclude that, if there is really a difference in the "feel" of verses 19b-20 of our text from what has gone before, this change has its source not in the creative imagination of the Church but in that guidance of the Spirit which is known as "inspiration."

An awareness of the phenomenon known as the "expanded sense" of what Jesus said helps the interpreter to appreciate both the movement in the life of the Church during the time from

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**Mark 2:18-20**

# Sons of the Bride-Chamber: An Historical-Critical Investigation

*Once, when John's disciples and the Pharisees were keeping a fast, some people came to him and said, "Why is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?" Jesus said to them, "Can you expect the bridegroom's friends to fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, there can be no fasting. But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and on that day they will fast." (New English Bible)*

**N**O method of Biblical interpretation comes without its presuppositions. Hence we must first set forth the basic assumptions of the Historical-Critical approach to Scripture. They follow herewith.

## 1. Presuppositions

Practitioners of the Historical-Critical Method work on the basis of the premises that: 1) The Scriptures must be interpreted like any other written material from the past; 2) In order to understand a given Biblical text the interpreter must understand the process of transmission behind the passage under consideration; 3) Truth and authority are derived chiefly from that step in the course of transmission which can best be validated by means of the criteria established by scientific historical investigation; 4) Therefore the canonical text is normally only a secondary source for the event being described and primary only for the time of composition.

It should be noted in this connection that the meaning of the term "historical" in this critical method is different from the significance given to the same word in the combination "historico-grammatical." For the consistent higher critic nothing is "historical" unless it can be shown to be so at the hand of scientifically established procedures. Included in this consideration is the observation that an occurrence can be thought of as "historical" only if it is analogous. For example, there have been many crucifixions during the course of man's tortuous history; hence the violent death of Jesus on the Cross may be historical. His resurrection cannot possibly be, since nothing like it has ever happened or is likely to occur. It has no analogy.

## 2. Context

Accordingly, Mark's pericope regarding the "sons of the bride-chamber" is "historical" only to the degree that it reports what Jesus actually said within a situation during His earthly ministry for which there is some kind of analogy in human affairs. Jesus, therefore, could not be talking about life in His Church through the ages to come, since no man can be that prescient.

What is more, on the basis of literary analysis it must be said that the individual incidents in the life of Jesus Christ as offered by Mark are held together in their sequence by artifices of redactional writing. There is only an artificial connection between the festivities in the house of Levi and the question about fasting. That is the import of the word "once" in the NEB translation above. It separates the "sons of the bride-chamber" pericope from the previous context. The connection is only a literary one. As a result, the setting of the incident, as described in Mark, is of very little value in determining what Jesus really said and meant.

## 3. Form

In form, says Vincent Taylor, these verses constitute a pronouncement story. Verse 18 is a brief narrative that provides the setting for an utterance of Jesus. The real interest of the whole pericope is the question put in 19a. As such, then, the whole passage must be interpreted in the light of the rules that apply to an analysis of literary form. What Mark offers as the setting may not, in fact, mean that some disciples of John and of the Pharisees actually ever asked such a question. The narrative may be a literary device from the tradition or from Mark himself to introduce the issue of Christianity's relationship to Judaism.

On the other hand, the use of the wedding imagery and raising the question of fasting seems to present a Jewish point of view. Hence, these two verses may reflect the situation of the historical Jesus to some extent.

Under any circumstances, this whole passage is part of what appears to be an independent unit, consisting of a series of conflict stories (2:1-3:6), which seems to have an autonomy of its own, probably dating from a time before the evangelist set about the task of writing his Gospel. The notice in Mark 3:6 on the plot to destroy Jesus comes much too soon within the over-all structure of Mark's Gospel, it is said. And so the reference in Mark 2:20 to the bridegroom being taken away may well be a literary device dating from a time after the Resurrection. In that case, obviously, Jesus did not say anything of this kind as he responded to the question about fasting, if it was really ever put to Him.

## 4. Fabric

Enough has been said to indicate that the historical critic does not think of verses 19b and 20 as having come from Jesus at all. They come out of a setting later than Jesus' own. What we read, therefore, is a notice of the Church basing the practice of fasting on Jesus' death; and somehow, somewhere during the oral period of tradition a pronouncement story was created by the Church to justify the practice of fasting with an utterance ascribed to Jesus.

Since Christians did their fasting on Friday and Tuesday; instead of Monday and Thursday as in the instance of the Pharisees, the question of the relationship with Judaism would naturally suggest itself. Furthermore, there was the problem of the connection between the work of John the Baptist and that of Jesus. Surely, the disciples of John must have mourned his death and so fasted, the issue was posed also from that side. Hence this pronouncement story came into being to deal with these items. To give the matter a ring of authority words were put on the lips of Jesus to help church leaders guide their flocks aright.

In short, the text from Mark, given above, consists of four kinds of "stuff." It may include some work from Jesus. It is more likely, however, that most of it comes from the Palestinian period of the church's life. During the course of transmission the item was structured as a pronouncement story, with an opening narrative to provide a setting for the question in verse 19. On top of all that Mark probably added the reference to the bridegroom being "taken away" to relate the passage to Isaiah 53, just as he did in 10:45.

Now, it is surely very obvious from what has been said so far that almost all of these suppositions are purely hypothetical. The various opinions on these matters, as held by New Testa-

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## Discipline . . .

(Continued from Page 2)

HE quotes "... what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? . . . come out from them and be separate . . ." (2 Corinthians 6: 14-18) but says that "It proves impossible to measure the difference between the believer and the unbeliever." Seemingly oblivious to Jesus' words, "By their fruits ye shall know them," he wonders, "who can enter into the heart of another person?"

He points to a decline in the belief in the doctrine of hell, and joins "many mainline theologians" who stress "God's love instead of his vengeance." Thus he makes of God's love and the church's love for straying sinners an act of revenge!

"We are all sinners," says Burgess. Of course we are! That isn't the question. The point is, what do we do with our sins? Do we turn to God for forgiveness and away from our sins in repentance or do we turn away from God and continue impenitently in our sins?

When Burgess doubts the validity ("an illegitimate approach") of dealing with specific sins, one wonders where that puts the Apostle Paul and his dealing with a specific member of the Corinthian parish and a specific sin.

Modern psychology, says Burgess, has moved much, e.g., drunkenness, out of the sin category into the area of illness, so there really isn't any call for church discipline and repentance. Moreover, those exercising church discipline are often motivated "by monomania or senility"!

In short, the article opens an amazing mishmash of logical and doctrinal confusion, irrelevancies, and errors. That it could be written and printed shows the need for a renewed study of the scriptural doctrine of church discipline.

A recent issue of the *Northwestern Lutheran* has an editorial, "Reversing Time and Tide." Carleton Toppe, with the objectiveness of one outside the Missouri Synod, lists some of the "painful sacrifices" which are ahead of us following New Orleans. He writes, "The distastefulness of strong discipline must replace the former more palatable permissiveness" which "has led only to theological decay." He concludes that if Missouri is restored to "confessional integrity" it "will be almost a theological miracle." Strike the word "almost."

And that's all right. We who still take the Bible seriously are quite comfortable in a world of miracles.

The Rev. Ewald J. Otto, Pastor  
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Quincy, Illinois

## Affirm

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## Proclaim . . .

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publishing my writings. I realize that truth is historical and that both of us are probably right in what we are saying. The trouble is that we do not understand each other. You teach and proclaim what you want, and I will do the same. After all, the Gospel has made us free!"

I wonder what kind of gospel would be proclaimed today had something like that really taken place! Thank God that Martin Luther did have the courage to rise up in defense, not of the Gospel, but of its pure proclamation. He recognized God's truth as unchanging, and pure doctrine as something which could be drawn from it. He was willing to put his life on the line to defend that concept, confident that "He's by our side upon the plain with His good gifts and Spirit."

SO it is today. Again it is the pure proclamation that we must be concerned about. The same insidious voice which tempted man of old is with us today. The sweet, sibilant tones of Satan are still repeating over and over again that tempting phrase, "Did God Say?", and the ears of sinful man are wide open to listen. All too often pride and a selfish desire for attention lead him to say, "God could not possibly have meant that. I will reinterpret it."

The result has been a proliferation of many gospels, each as misleading and false as that proclaimed by those against whom Luther contended. The instrument which was used then was tradition. Today it is the Historical-Critical Method. Both place man in judgment over God's Word, allowing him to interpret passages as he wishes. The result is always the same: man begins to teach that he can earn at least part of his salvation. Scare tactic? Why not honestly examine many of the gospels being proclaimed today within our church bodies or taught within seminaries, and see if this is not true?

Proclaim??? Yes, that is still our greatest task, both as individuals and as a church body. Maybe it is time that we all did a little less talking about, and instead did more doing of, that important mission. But it must be a pure Gospel, and for that purity we must fight. We still have assigned to us that additional task to "Contend for the faith which was *once for all* delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). That too shall be with us till the end of time, for Satan will not cease *his* labors until Christ returns.

Richard Korthals  
Arcadia, Michigan

## The Editorial Group

The Rev. William T. Eggers  
Richard G. Korthals  
Dr. Walter A. Maier  
The Rev. Ewald J. Otto  
Dr. Robert Preus

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## 'Reworking' Doctrinal Formulations?

JOHN Tietjen and the faculty majority assert that "within the household of faith we enjoy the freedom of the Gospel so that we are free to discuss and rework ancient and traditional formulations of doctrine" (*Faithful*, etc., Part I, p. 4).

Note that Dr. Tietjen and his colleagues are talking here about freedom not merely to revise exegetical conclusions and historical judgments as long as doctrine is not involved—they are talking about "reworking" doctrinal formulations.

Note that they are not merely talking about doctrinal formulations in a document such as, for instance, the *Brief Statement*, in which there may be some wording that they consider inadequate. They are talking about reworking *ancient* formulations of doctrine! Does this mean the Catholic Creeds, the Lutheran Symbols?

No matter which "ancient and traditional formulations of doctrine" the faculty has in mind to "rework" they will find very little support in the Lutheran Symbols for such a project. The theologians of the Augsburg Confession certainly knew, and rejoiced in, and were ready to die for the freedom of the Gospel, but they never thought of this freedom as license to call into question the abiding validity of ancient and orthodox formulations of doctrine. Full twelve centuries after Nicea the Lutherans at Augsburg said that with great unanimity their churches still taught that the *decree* (the doctrinal formulation) of the Council of Nicea concerning the doctrine of the Trinity "is true and should be believed without any doubting" (*Augsburg Confession*, Article I, 1).

Note that notwithstanding their protestations that they claim freedom to rework only the "formulations" and not the doctrine, their whole document is full of evidence that *doctrine*, even the central doctrine of the Christian faith, is reworked in a manner that constitutes a rejection of both ancient and traditional formulations and ancient and traditional doctrine.

FOR example, in their "Affirmations of Faith," which they claim to be "grounded in the three central articles of the Nicene Creed" (p. 4), they exploit the ambiguity of the English phrase "for us" in such a way as simply to omit any confession of substitutionary atonement while *seeming* to confess it. In the first full paragraph on page 7 the phrase "for us" appears a total of eight times. There is nothing to indicate that in any case "for us" means "in our stead." The sheer repetition of the formula "for us" obscures the basic distinction between the meaning of this phrase when we say "For us Christ died," and when we say, "For us He will return." Will His return be substitutionary? Was His death "for us" precisely the same sense as His coming again will be "for us?" The faculty confession, while claiming to be grounded on the Nicene Symbol, completely ignores a very significant difference in wording found in the Greek and Latin versions. When speaking of Christ's *incarnation*, the Nicene Creed says: *propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit*, i.e., "on account of us men and our salvation He came down." When speaking of His crucifixion the Creed says: *pro nobis*, i.e., "for us" in the sense of "in our stead". This distinction between what Christ does "for my benefit" (as, e.g., ruling over all things) and what He did "in my stead" (His active and passive obedience) simply does not come to expression in the faculty's "Affirmations" (Cp. Pieper, Vol. II, p. 344-347—especially footnote 32). Their reworking of the formulation amounts to losing the doctrine!

The Rev. Harry A. Huth, Pastor  
St. John Lutheran Church, Rice Lake, Wisconsin

## St. Louis Seminary Board Issues News Release

The Board of Control of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., met Saturday, September 29th, at a specially-called meeting in an effort to cope with its overload of agenda items since the New Orleans Convention of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

The Board resolved to call upon L. P. Buelow of Green Bay and Harlan Harnapp of North Platte, Neb., to communicate once again and meet at greater length with Seminary President John H. Tietjen to find a peaceful and amiable solution to the matter of their charges against him in August which brought about his suspension.

This action was the result of a recommendation from the Synodical Commission on Constitutional Matters which advised the Board of Control "to revert to the first step . . . so that no person subject to being charged under Bylaw 6.79 can say that any action against him was precipitated or that he was not treated 'in the spirit of Christian love.'"

This recommendation followed on the heels of another statement, wherein the Commission on Constitutional Matters ruled that "a Board of Control may indeed suspend the president of an institution from the performance of all his official duties."

The Board reverted back to its August 17th, 1973 position by resolving that the Board of Control resolution of August 18th, suspending Dr. John H. Tietjen, "may be vacated without prejudice."

With a directive of the Synodical Board of Directors at hand, the Seminary Board of Control acted to start an inquiry into "the formation of the Fund for Lutheran Theological Education, Inc." This new Missouri corporation is allegedly existing to raise funds for the purpose of aiding and assisting in the promotion of scholarship and teaching in Lutheran theology. While it may seem not to conflict with the purpose of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, if true, could be duplicating to some degree, or competing with, the objectives and purposes of the Synod itself. Therefore, the Board of Control's Chairman, the Rev. E. J. Otto of Quincy, Ill., and its treasurer, Mr. Charles H. Burmeister of St. Louis, have been delegated to undertake the inquiry and report their findings to the Board at its regularly scheduled meeting on October 15 before delivering the results of its finding to the Synodical Board of Directors on November 1. The incorporators, all of whom are members of the Seminary faculty, including Dr. Tietjen, are to be invited to the next meeting of the Board of Control in October when the findings are presented.

## The Enlarged Editorial Group

Balance has named Dr. Robert Preus, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, to *Affirm's* Editorial Group. Dr. Preus, a member of the Seminary's faculty minority and a frequent contributor to *Affirm*, is widely known throughout the church for his faithful and competent witness to Missouri's historic theology and for his full identification with the redemption in Christ the Savior, the truths this Lord has revealed in His inspired and inerrant Word, and the church's great missionary task to the peoples of the world. *Affirm* happily and proudly welcomes Dr. Preus to its staff.

Those of you in or near the Mankato area can conveniently hear Dr. Preus present the 1973 Annual Reformation Lectures at Bethany Lutheran College there. His topic will be: *How is the Lutheran Church to Interpret and Use the Old and New Testaments?* These lectures will be given on November 1st and 2nd; registrations and inquiries should be addressed to The Convocation Committee at the College, 734 Marsh Street, Mankato, Minn., 56001; a \$5.00 registration fee will cover Dr. Preus' three appearances. Reactors and audience participation will be featured in the program.

## Grammatical Consideration...

(Continued from Page 4)

Jesus' resurrection to the moment when Mark wrote the first of the four Gospels we now have. This very insight reveals the difference between the way in which the disciples of ordinary rabbis "remembered" the words of their teachers and the dynamic dimensions of the "recalling" done by the Holy Spirit in that living community we know as the Church. That, in turn, helps the reader to see the text as proclamation and not merely as an historical account of the kind that one finds, let us say, in the Mishna of rabbinic Judaism.

### 5. Meaning

What, then, is the meaning of the passage given at Mark 2:18-20? Answering this question is, of course, the chief aim of the interpreter. The point of the incident in Levi's home was that of inviting even John's disciples and the Pharisees to join in the celebration of the Messianic age, where publicans and sinners had anticipated them in the festivities of the kingdom. At the same time, the text was written to underline Jesus' claim to being the Messiah, whose followers served as "sons of the bride-chamber." The time of being best man, as in the case of John the Baptist, was over.

In this passage, moreover, Jesus identifies Himself with the bridegroom of Old Testament prophecy. The time of fulfilment came with Him, but it involved the necessity for the bridegroom to be "taken away." Good Friday had to precede Easter. In days to come any friends of the bridegroom would do well to realize that the time of fasting under the old covenant had come to an end. Any fasting or mourning in the new age could only be tentative, recalling that the bridegroom had to be crucified in order to make permanent the joy of the Messianic banquet.

Dr. Martin H. Scharlemann  
Concordia Seminary  
St. Louis, Missouri

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## Critical Method...

(Continued from Page 5)

ment scholars, fill an incredible amount of space, which could be more constructively used to get at the meaning of the text.

### 5. Meaning

In point of fact, one of the very minor interests of most historical critics is to get at the meaning of the canonical text for the purpose of using it as a word of authority. We can find an exhibit of this kind of disproportion in Vincent Taylor's commentary on Mark. As critics go, Taylor is one of the more sober practitioners of the art of interpretation as practiced by historical critics. Yet a total of forty-three lines of very tight print are devoted to the problems of investigating the form and fabric of these few verses in Mark. The question of meaning is handled in five and one-half lines, after several columns have been devoted to a study of grammar and practices in Judaism as well as of the early Church. What he says on the matter of significance goes like this (p.211):

The implication of the saying is that the Kingdom is already present, that He is its rightful Lord, and that it is incompatible with a situation so joyous that His groomsmen should mourn.

Very revealing is F. C. Grant's treatment in the *Interpreter's Bible* (VII, 675f.) He holds that the purpose of the text was "to justify the later Christian observance of fasting." Prior to that sentence he has two very revealing observations: "Clearly Mark, and perhaps those who handed down the tradition before him, had in mind the question, Why do Christians fast if Jesus did not? . . . This was no doubt a subject of controversy at a later time; but the answer went back to Jesus . . ."

These remarks clearly indicate to what extent the canonical text is taken by critical scholars as a primary authority for the time when Mark was writing and as very secondary for anything said about the ministry of Jesus. This is precisely the way in which Biblical authority is eroded by the Historical-Critical Method.

Dr. Martin H. Scharlemann  
Concordia Seminary  
St. Louis, Missouri

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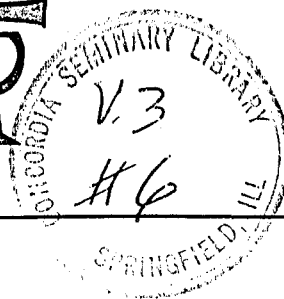
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Volume III, No. 6

November, 1973



"I believed,  
and therefore have  
I spoken"  
2 Cor. 4:13

## ELIM Attacks Missouri

LATE in August, at the liberals' Chicago meeting, the assault on Missouri's heritage took a new and more dangerous turn.

Until then liberals had worked more or less informally and relied to a large extent on their network of friends and sympathizers at all levels of church life.

They had repeatedly demonstrated, until the election of Dr. Preus as Missouri's president, the effectiveness of their informal arrangements and understandings. They had penetrated to the heart of Missouri's official structure and had captured many vital positions for the liberal cause.

They had used the leverage these key positions gave them to influence, disproportionately, the life and stance of Missouri.

But the pressure of New Orleans, especially its resolutions and elections, have prompted them to reassess and change their strategy. They have decided that to conquer the church for their liberal beliefs they now need a formal liberal organization.

At Chicago they created it. They named it *Evangelical Lutherans in Mission* or ELIM. Their disclaimer that they aren't a "church within a church" but rather "a movement within the church" seems a matter of naive semantics. However they chose to describe it, the reality is that they will devote their energies and monies and intellects the next years to destroying Missouri's theological heritage.

Humanly speaking, they may manage it.

They are part of a reality which won't go away just because conservatives wish it would. go away. As one of our older clerics put it the other day, when he reminisced about his Sem days and the theological unity Missouri once had, "Those halcyon days are gone; they won't come again."

### *Our Joyful Witness*

MANY would agree. Many would also point out that the intense struggle we're in is God's way of taking us to levels of maturity and joy we may never have known possible.

Many, who'd like to put the whole struggle out of their minds and lives but know they can't and stay faithful to God, also know that this may offer them the greatest chance in their lives to plunge into an affirmative and joyful and abundant witness to our Lord Jesus Christ and His Word.

Many are keenly aware that when the church gets beyond

this struggle with liberalism it will be a stronger, more thoroughly developed church.

### *The Liberal Attack*

BUT the present reality is that ELIM has publicly stated that it will promote its liberal theology (it doesn't use precisely that terminology) within Missouri and raise money to support this many-pronged promotional effort. A group of people long identified as the leadership in Missouri's liberal movement forms the nucleus of its board of directors. To forward its cause ELIM has now apparently circulated the clergy of the church with its statement of its goals, a broad plan to reach them, and a membership invitation.

Its basic literature calls the key New Orleans resolutions "errant actions" it protests. It charges that the Tietjen resolution at the convention offers "a vivid illustration of the crisis of legalism we now face." It speaks of mistrust and the conservative desire "for complete conformity in interpreting every detail of the Holy Scriptures."

The truth is that the key New Orleans resolutions were a powerful and positive expression of the heritage of Missouri—an expression of the great love and devotion of Missouri's believers to our Lord Jesus. If these believers erred at the convention, He has been erring these twenty centuries.

MOREOVER, Missouri doesn't face a crisis of legalism; Tietjen has been accorded every Christian courtesy and still is being dealt with evangelically. And should the liberals criticize the substance of conservative theology, the basis for disagreeing with Tietjen, as "legalistic," all Missouri, all its history and our Lord Jesus Christ Himself have been guilty of the worst kind of legalism.

That the convention or its conservative delegates or even merely its leaders desire complete conformity in interpreting every detail of the Bible is an astonishing statement. Missouri's record on exegetical freedom is long and clear and a matter of its innermost integrity in approaching religious questions.

Of course, what Missouri does oppose is judging the substance and the style of the Word by rationalistic techniques.

ELIM will predictably make many more statements like these.

It is this kind of attack, now formally organized, that conservatives must respond to. The battle of ideas, really a battle over interpreting the Word, will not go away.

SEE QUESTIONNAIRE INSIDE

# On the News Front

## *The Liberal Goal*

Tapes made at the Chicago meeting at which Missouri's liberals organized their group indicate the extent to which they apparently are willing to depart from Missouri's great Biblical heritage. If you still haven't been persuaded that the liberals are for real and mean business, the following quotation from one of the tapes, fully authenticated, should persuade you.

I can't take back (much of these discussions) to my laymen—they don't know all of these philosophical subjects . . . They don't know if Adam and Eve were real. They don't even CARE! [Laughter] They don't care if YOU believe that Adam and Eve were real. [Sustained laughter] . . . You've got to take a positive stand on this guy Preus. There is one issue here: the bastardization of the Gospel and the Confessions by a guy named Preus. We have one job and that is to remove that man from office. [Loud and sustained applause] . . . stick to your goal. And you have one goal! And that is the defeat of Preus and all the people like him in this church. Run them out!

\* \* \*

## *Worthwhile Reading*

You will be interested in *The New Arianism*, an address Marcus R. Braun delivered last April to the Lutheran Research Association. Mr. Braun, one of Missouri's concerned laymen with impeccable credentials on behalf of conservatism, in his speech showed the surprising parallels between the old Arian heresy, which denied the Godhead of Jesus Christ, and the current attack in Missouri on the inspiration and inerrancy of the Word. At the end of his talk he called for a new creedal statement to counteract today's grave theological problem. You will find his speech worthwhile and enjoy it, and you may obtain your free copy from Mr. Marcus R. Braun, 1129 West 41st Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64111. Just write him!

\* \* \*

## *Procedures and The Sem*

Some of the procedural details the Board of Control of our St. Louis Seminary must follow were passed as Section 6.79 a-m in the *Handbook of Synod*. You may get some idea of the steps which have to be taken in an orderly manner from the following paragraphs which cover only the first three of these steps.

- a) When the Board of Control receives a charge against any member of the faculty of an educational institution of the Synod, in the spirit of Christian love it shall first call upon the complainant to communicate directly with the person against whom he had a complaint and

attempt to find a peaceful and amicable resolution of the matter.

- b) If subsequently the complainant desires to pursue the matter, he shall so notify the Board of Control and present the charge in writing, formulated with reasonable definiteness, and the evidence. The Board of Control shall then direct the president of the institution to attempt to deal with it to the satisfaction of all concerned. Charges against the president of the institution shall be dealt with by the chairman of the Board of Control.

If the complainant does not notify the Board of Control and present his charge in writing within 60 days, the Board of Control may rule that the matter has been resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

- c) If the board decides not to proceed, or if the board has not acted within 90 days after the complainant has notified the Board of Control in writing that he wishes to pursue the matter, if the complainant is dissatisfied and the charge involves conduct unbecoming a Christian or advocacy of false doctrine (Constitution, Article II) the complainant may take his complaint to the District President. If he finds the action of the District President unacceptable, he may take his complaint to the Synodical President under the pertinent provisions of Bylaw 6.80.

\* \* \*

## *The Uses of Theological Deviates*

Through the centuries the church has recognized that those who deviate from its teachings have, under God, not just disturbed the church, but have also indirectly been a blessing to its orthodoxy. Many of us have heard older and sainted pastors talk about the way in which some church struggle drove them deeper into the Word of God, helped them better understand its true riches, and made their faith in the doctrines of the Bible all the firmer. Without doubt that's happening among conservatives today. Long ago Emile Durkheim, a pioneer sociologist, described the role of deviates with great insight and precision. In *The Social Bond* (Knopf, 1970), Robert A. Nisbet quotes him:

Human society cannot exist, Durkheim declared, except on the basis of moral consensus. But there is always the danger that this consensus will become weak and tenuous through the erosion of time. The community will suffer. Hence the importance of those offenses which from time to time remind community members of the importance of the norms that the offenses violated. In the sense of horror or repugnance awakened by the offense itself in the surrounding community lies the possibility of the reaffirming of values that every group or community requires from time to time in the interest of preservation of its moral consensus.

The application seems obvious.



# The Declaration of Protest and Confession of July 24th

## Published by the St. Louis Seminary Faculty Majority

**W**HAT moved the St. Louis faculty majority, meeting in a "non-faculty-session," to reject the New Orleans Resolutions pertaining to the Seminary situation? How did it happen that a one-time solid orthodox faculty began to turn against its heritage after World War II, eventually to repudiate much of it, and in the process disintegrate theologically and morally?

The faculty minority lived through excruciatingly painful years observing and testifying against these developments. But it is not really possible to communicate some aspects of those calamitous events. I doubt that the full story of those years will ever be told.

Emerging from the Great Depression and the aftermath of World War II, a strong consensus in Synod favored the rapid updating of the work-style of Synod for maximum effectiveness. A great harvest waited to be brought in. Synod doubled in size, built new church plants and schools, reorganized its preparatory and seminary system, and massively changed its former principles of education to eliminate areas of ideational incompatibility with secular education and to promote the popular approach toward secular humanism.

The general intention to "update" was good. But in the pursuit of cultural domestication the leadership of Synod was either unwilling or unable to anticipate the grave possibility that the achievement of Synod's cultural domestication would also entail a serious erosion of its theological stewardship. During the 1960's the voices which warned Synod against these dangers could no longer be dismissed.

About this time, the quiescent orthodox majority in Synod did begin realistically to appraise the danger and made its judgment effective by voting for a new leadership in 1969 at Denver. During the following years, Synod's conservative majority had to experience the painful consequences of the ideological aberration of a small cadre of professors, followed by strategically placed administrators, pastors and District Presidents. The Milwaukee Convention of 1971 opened the eyes of many more to observe the disproportionately large influence or control exercised by the liberal cadre and their followers.

The liberal apparatus in Synod clearly perceived that the ecumenical and social-political aspects of its ultimate ideological program would have no chance of realization without the prior destruction or at least the practical nullification of Synod's orthodox theological consensus. That had to be done through the capture of Synod's system of higher education, especially its seminaries and teacher colleges.

**I**N the year 1969, liberals in Synod were so convinced their program would be realized that they enticed a large number of the faculty to join them. When the moment of truth arrived for the faculty at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, only five faculty members stood up against the liberals. Having to cope also with a hostile or indifferent Board of Control, the faculty minority was made to pay dearly for its refusal to go along with the Seminary administration in its war against orthodoxy. But from henceforth the betrayal of theological orthodoxy at the St. Louis Seminary could no longer proceed under the propaganda smoke-screen that

nothing had been changed in the teaching of theology in Synod. To this state of affairs the New Orleans Convention had to speak.

After throwing off the procedural shackles of the "moderate"-liberal minority, who would not allow resolutions to come to a vote, Synod in convention assembled at New Orleans last July spoke "loud and clear." Resolutions 3-01 "To Adopt A Statement" and Resolution 3-09 "To Declare Faculty Majority in Violation of Article II of the Constitution" were passed by heavy margins. These actions of Synod confirmed the charges brought against the teaching of the faculty majority by various individuals, the faculty minority, the official Fact-Finding Committee, and congregations and Districts of Synod.

The faculty majority made their response to the resolutions of the New Orleans convention in its *Declaration of Protest and Confession* (adopted in a "non-faculty meeting" of the faculty majority). Written in the frantic style of apparently driven people, it is both a poorly worded and impertinent exercise to deceive, if such people could be found, the uninformed and credulous in Synod.

The "protest" in the faculty majority statement contains false charges against the convention of Synod, and their "confession" is unfaithful to the stewardship given them by Synod. The following points must be raised against them:

1. *It is simply not true* that the convention has distorted or misrepresented faculty teaching. Contrary to their protesting accusations against Synod, the faculty majority do not "teach what the Scriptures teach."

2. *The convention repudiated* members of the Board of Control who had supported the faculty majority and, contrary to the false charge contained in the faculty majority protest, Synod followed its own procedure by electing men to the Board of Control loyal to its theology and willing to be the servants of Synod. If the remaining supporters of the faculty (Board members who claim to be unable to find any false teaching at Concordia Seminary) had been up for election at New Orleans, it is a reasonable conclusion that they would have been repudiated also. Perhaps it is a feature of the "hidden agenda" of the faculty majority protest that the convention "violated procedure" by not electing faculty majority supporters to the Board of Control. But since Synod would hardly take such a childish argument seriously, the "protest and confession" pursues the "procedure" gambit without telling the full story. But members of Synod, deeply pained by this bruising strife in Synod, provoked by a rebellious faculty majority and their followers in Synod, should know that the faculty majority protests "the convention's violation of the procedures for evangelical discipline" and so camouflages their own rejection of the convention's authority and its judgment upon the faculty majority.

3. *The faculty majority charges* the convention with "breach of contract." Apparently they borrowed this mistaken argument from those who accuse their opponents of doing what they themselves have done or would like to do,

(Continued on Page 5)

## Is It True: 'There Are No Fixed Rules for the Interpretation of Scripture'?

ON July 24, 1973 a majority (50) of the professors of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis served notice to the synod which hired them and helps pay their salaries that they will not recognize the New Orleans Convention's resolutions on doctrine, at least those critical of the faculty's doctrinal stance. With this action they simply continue to do what they have done in the past about certain doctrinal resolutions passed by the Synod at Cleveland, Detroit, Milwaukee—either ignoring them or in some instances teaching what they prohibit. Standing before a statue of the reformer, Martin Luther, Dr. Richard Caemmerer read a *Declaration of Protest and Confession*, signed by 50 professors and members of the Seminary's administrative staff.

According to Religious News Service, July 25, 1973 "the two-page document said, in effect, that the leadership of the Church and the majority of the delegates at the convention—not the Concordia faculty—are abridging Lutheran standards. The faculty statement called upon the synod's constituency to join them and the dissenting delegates at New Orleans in forming a common movement of protest and confession." The faculty statement is organized around six statements of protest and seven statements of confession.

Religious News Service on September 10, 1973 reported that five faculty members of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, repudiated a *Declaration of Protest and Confession* as "an act of rebellion and defiance" against the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The minority statement claims that the statement of the faculty majority "was passed by an irregular meeting of the faculty members to which they were not invited, and for which signatures were solicited from faculty members all over the country while we were not informed of what was happening." The minority professors, Doctors R. Bohlmann (on leave), R. Klann, R. Preus, M. Scharlemann and L. Wunderlich have issued a counter appeal, in which they have responded to the protests and confessions.

*Info, Inc.* (P. O. Box 3469, St. Louis, Missouri 63143) early in August circulated the majority statement of the Concordia faculty and made an appeal to the members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to "join in a common movement of protest and confession within Synod." The September, 1973 issue of *The Concordia Theological Monthly* printed the faculty's statement as its lead editorial.

Responding to those who asked support for a *Declaration of Protest and Confession*, this writer believes there are criticisms which must be made about this document, because assertions in it are misleading and in some cases not even factual.

ITS fifth confession deals with the heart of the problem in our Synod and needs careful examination. It reads: "We confess an open Bible unfettered by any human rules." With Luther we "acknowledge no fixed rules for the interpretation of the Word of God"—whether historical-critical, grammatical-historical or any other—"since the Word of God, which teaches freedom in all other matters, must not be bound." ("The Freedom of a Christian," *Luther's Works*, American Edition, Vol. 31, p. 341).

If there are no fixed rules for the interpretation of the Bible, the Word of God can be treated like a wax nose and given any shape desired. This is exactly what the exegetes of the St. Louis majority would like. Then the Bible can be interpreted to accommodate it to the latest conclusions of "scientific theology." However, it is not true that the St. Louis Seminary exegetes have not been following any one system of interpretation; they have been pursuing the Historical-Critical Method which is eminently suited to twist the teachings of God's Word to conform to the latest pronouncements of name theologians in their most recent publications.

Though the Synod has employed the historical-grammatical method during the last 127 years, the Department of Biblical Studies at St. Louis has been teaching its undergraduate and graduate students in recent years the *historical-critical method* and insisting that they also employ it as the proper method of interpretation. Before the New Orleans Convention faculty members toured the country in defense of the Historical-Critical Method. Suddenly, they do not now follow it.

DR. Herbert T. Mayer, one of the signers of the St. Louis faculty protest statement, authored a volume in the Concordia Leadership Training Series, *Interpreting the Holy Scriptures* (Concordia, 1967). In the preface to this book, Dr. A. Jaksman writes: "Principles for a proper study and use of the Bible have always been important to the life of the church and its message to the world, as also this text indicates." Again he asserts: "Present-day interest in principles of Biblical interpretation has been 'provoked' largely by controversies of one kind or another. *Far more important is the need of the application of sound principles in the personal use and teaching of the Bible*" (italics in text, pp. 3-4). Dr. Mayer himself begins his book with this assertion: "This book deals with methods of studying and interpreting the Bible. Because Christians place great emphasis upon Biblical teachings, they need to be confident that they understand the Bible properly. The purpose of this course is to help teachers and students become better Bible interpreters." (p. 9)

But now, strangely enough, the Synod is advised: "We acknowledge no fixed rules for the interpretation of the Bible." Since the Bible was not written for angels by angels, but by men who employed Hebrew, Aramaic and Koine Greek, and since the Bible was intended for human beings, necessity demands that correct rules control the interpretations of the Scriptures. Down throughout the Christian centuries, theologians of the past have written hermeneutical manuals which set forth the correct rules for understanding the Bible and also warned against wrong rules, whose application would produce misinterpretations and give meanings contrary to the Word of God.

The faculty protest statement goes so far as to depict Luther as sharing their view that the Bible needs no rules for its correct interpretation. Nothing could be farther from

(Continued on Page 6)

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Sincerely,  
THE EDITORIAL GROUP

## QUESTIONNAIRE

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# Questionnaire — (Continued from Previous Page)

The chief issues presented in *Affirm* are listed below; for each issue check the appropriate column (columns).

|  | Did you read any<br>article in <i>Affirm</i><br>on this subject? | Has <i>Affirm</i><br>helped clarify<br>this issue |
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## Declaration

(Continued from Page 3)

if they could. The initial and actual breach of contract occurred when the faculty majority abandoned and betrayed the doctrinal positions of Synod. Synod had spoken very clearly for years on the very points of controversy. It is altogether reasonable that professors charged to be doctrinally faithful in the exercise of their stewardship should have a working familiarity with the doctrinal positions adopted and supported by Synod. If synodical teachers will not or cannot tolerate the doctrinal positions of Synod, they are under no coercion to teach in Synod. But they are not privileged to force their false teachings upon Synod in the name of evangelical or academic freedom.

4. It is reckless of the faculty majority to claim to stand with Luther "for an open Bible which we are free to read on its own terms, limited only by our voluntary commitment to the Lutheran Confessions." The fact is that Luther in his writings utterly repudiated the controversial doctrinal positions of the faculty majority. But let the thoughtful reader give close attention also to the "cop-out" of the faculty majority protest—"which we are free to read on its own terms." May we assume that the faculty majority reserves unto itself the determination of what the Bible's "own terms" are? Any other surmise would not make good sense in the context of the faculty majority's history. The New Orleans Convention judged them for that.

5. Even neutral observers at the New Orleans Convention would recognize the absurdity of the charge that the convention used "coercive power" against the "moderate"-liberal dissenters. There was real "procedural bullying" at the convention, but it came from its "moderate" minority. Those thoroughly familiar with the moral standards of the faculty majority leadership will recognize the falsity of the charge that the convention used "coercive power" against them. The "moderate" friends of the faculty majority did their immoderate best on the convention floor to prevent voting on the resolutions affecting the faculty majority. Eventually the majority brought the convention to a vote, and the "moderate"-liberal cause lost by large margins (584 to 429, and 574 to 451). We may therefore take it to be the sense of the faculty majority protest on this point that any vote against them and their program was an exercise of a form of "coercive power." In other words, the faculty majority is apparently putting the members of Synod on notice that a convention delegate, making a witness to or an affirmation of true doctrine by his vote, becomes guilty of coercing the "moderate"-liberal faculty majority. Lately, leading members of the faculty majority have adopted the high-handed position that a convention of Synod has neither the power nor the right to do anything regarding doctrinal discipline, because (they say) a convention is not Synod, but only Synod in convention assembled. We invite the reader to formulate his own comment on this sophistry.

6. Finally, the faculty majority protests "the convention's unconstitutional act of altering the Synod's confessional standard by expanding the doctrinal article of the Constitution (Art. II) to include doctrinal statements adopted by the Synod and by making such statements binding upon all the Synod's members." But who says the convention resolutions are unconstitutional? Furthermore, since when is a convention of Synod forbidden to interpret its own Constitution for the purpose of delineating its proper application? The faculty majority is now in the position comparable to someone who has been convicted of a capital offense (e.g.,

betraying his entrusted stewardship by teaching false doctrine), who then argues that the court rendered an unconstitutional verdict upon him because he is rightfully entitled to commit the offense for which he has been sentenced. That protest of the faculty majority is obviously another form of rebellion against Synod, specifically rebellion against the right of Synod to determine its doctrinal identity as well as the terms of membership. To declare by protest that an orderly vote on the terms of Synod's self-identification as a fellowship is unconstitutional has no standing whatever in law, it has no logically persuasive force, and, above all else, it has no theological support.

The "confessional" part of the "Declaration" of the faculty majority may be regarded as a material contradiction of the "protest". It hardly deserves serious discussion, particularly since its conclusion is not a confession but a resolution, declaring that the faculty majority intends to remain as they are. But such a resolution must be checked against the terms of membership in Synod—the terms of fellowship. No doubt, this will be done in due course.

Dr. Richard Klann  
Concordia Seminary  
St. Louis, Missouri

## Reason or Miracles?

The liberal approach to God's Word is essentially rational. Liberals often tend to accept only that which seems reasonable and logical. In this they reflect today's secular world. One conservative pastor pointedly comments on the Christian's believing approach to that same Word. He nicely puts the great question Missourians today face: do we want to believe God or rationalize about Him?

No amount of theological gymnastics will deliver a man from confessing the incredible if he wants to remain a Christian. Scripture takes us into a realm where axeheads float, seas part, manna falls, a great fish swallows and regurgitates a man, water changes to wine, storms subside at a command—and the blood of God's Son flows into Calvary's dust and is effective for the sins of the whole world. A positivistic mind-set must be repelled by all of it. The faith-view of reality accepts it because God has revealed it and the Spirit convinces us.

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## Rules

(Continued from Page 4)

the facts! It was because Luther inaugurated a hermeneutical revolution, breaking with the Roman Catholic system of Biblical interpretation, that the Lutheran Reformation was made possible. Any knowledgeable student of Luther's writings between 1512 and 1521 knows that Luther came to realize the inadequacy and erroneous nature of some of Rome's basic rules of interpretation. The four-fold sense of Scripture was repudiated; the allegorical method that had controlled Biblical interpretation for a thousand years was rejected, and Luther insisted that the literal meaning of the text was the normal sense of the Bible. The original languages in which the Bible was penned were to be the basis for Biblical interpretation, and not the Latin vulgate.

Basic rules of interpretation employed by Luther included the following: Scripture interprets Scripture. The dark and difficult passages are to be explained by the clear ones. The Old Testament often receives its true interpretation from the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. Many events in the New Testament were foretold in the Old Testament. There is only one plan of salvation which runs from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22. The Old Testament is to be understood Christologically. The heart of the Bible is Christ, whose coming and saving work were predicted as early as Genesis 3:15. Luther accepted without reservation the many miracles of both Testaments. He refused to harmonize doctrines that

would appear to be contradictory. A clear statement was to be accepted without question. No teaching was to be accepted that contradicted the doctrine of justification by faith. Law and Gospel were to be distinguished as to their purpose, function and effect.

It is a complete misrepresentation of the facts of Reformation church history to claim that Luther did not operate with fixed rules of interpretation. The Roman Catholic Church of the reformer's day was teaching false doctrine because of the use of false rules of interpretation and was thus hindering the true Gospel from having its free course in the world.

Dr. Raymond F. Surburg  
Concordia Seminary  
Springfield, Illinois

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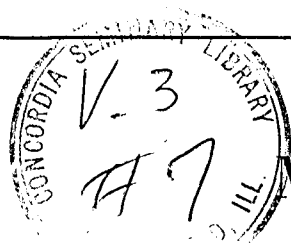




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"I believed,  
and therefore have  
I spoken"  
2 Cor. 4:13



## More About 'The Statement'

THE scene was the New Orleans Convention. The delegates were discussing the *Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* which the president of Synod offered the faculty of Concordia Seminary at St. Louis for reaction, debating whether to adopt it or not. A clergy delegate from New England spoke out against Resolution 3-01 to adopt the *Statement*, saying at the top of his lungs, "This is a terrifying resolution." Of course such an outburst was not an attempt at reasoned argumentation. It was unreasonable, hysterical bombast. But the outburst and others like it during the debate had a reasoned and calculated purpose. It was to frighten people, to make them think there was something sinister about the *Statement* or the use to which it would be put. It was to scare off the hundreds of delegates who saw nothing wrong with the *Statement*, but agreed with it, by making them believe that the *Statement* would become the weapon of a purge in the Church. It was to intimidate those of us, the great majority, who all along supported the *Statement* as a useful vehicle for reconciliation and an excellent summary of our deepest convictions on the issues confronting our synod, to make us nervous, confused, defensive, willing to compromise. The hysterical bombast was in part successful. Many who agreed with the *Statement* voted against its adoption. During the convention two lay delegates approached me, much disturbed over the possibility of being excommunicated from their congregations if they would not sign the *Statement*. Even after I assured them that I was sure nothing like that ever happened in 125 years of Missouri Synod history they were still apprehensive. So deep the seeds of fear and suspicion had been sown. But in the end reason prevailed and the *Statement* was adopted.

Since New Orleans those who oppose the historic doctrinal position of Missouri have kept up a relentless barrage of propaganda and polemics against the *Statement* and the action of the Missouri in adopting it.

Three major arguments have been employed against Synod's action in adopting the *Statement*:

- I. The adoption of the *Statement* is unconstitutional;
- II. The *Statement* will be used in a legalistic way. It will be raised to the level of the Lutheran Confessions. Teachers and others in Synod will be forced to adopt it or sign it against their will;
- III. The theology of the *Statement* is inadequate and even false in places.

I would like to answer each of these arguments.

I. The charge that the adoption of the *Statement* is unconstitutional has been formally made in a protest by the newly incorporated dissident group called ELIM (Evangelical Lutherans in Mission). And they declare "null and void" Resolution 3-01 and any attempt to make the *Statement* binding upon them. Members of the St. Louis faculty have also recently made similar charges. The argument against the constitutionality of Resolution 3-01 is a) that the *Statement* may be used in a legalistic way, and b) that in effect this resolution adds something to Article II of Synod's constitution which alone is the doctrinal basis for one's membership in the LCMS.

This entire argument about constitutionality is untenable and is a ruse. And I suspect that those who advance the argument know this. For to my knowledge no one has brought this matter before the synodical Commission on Constitutional Matters. A ruling would go against them. Why?

First, because every member of Synod by pledging himself to the constitution has bound himself *doctrinally* to statements which are more than what is in Article II. He binds himself also to Article III and Article VI which go beyond anything explicitly stated in Scripture or the Confessions, but draw inferences from Scripture and the Confessions for our situation today.

Second, the Missouri Synod in the past has bound itself and its members to doctrinal statements in addition to their formal subscription to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions included in Article II of the constitution. In 1881 the Synod and its members adopted Dr. Walther's "Thirteen Theses" dealing with the doctrines of conversion and election. These theses were used to discipline certain members of Synod who refused to be bound by them as a correct exposition of the teachings of Scripture and the Confessions. Thus, adopting doctrinal statements, binding ourselves to them, and using them to help settle controversies has been done in the past and was not considered unconstitutional. After all, to bind ourselves to a statement that is in agreement with Scripture and the Confessions cannot be unconstitutional. What is Biblical and Confessional is always constitutional.

Third, the same New Orleans Convention which adopted the *Statement* also reaffirmed the *Mission Affirmations* originally adopted by Synod at its Detroit Convention (New Orleans Resolution 1-06). If it is constitutional to reaffirm one doctrinal statement, is it somehow unconstitutional to adopt another? To my knowledge no one has questioned the constitutionality of the adoption or reaffirmation of the *Mission Affirmations*.

(Continued on Page 2)

## Statement...

(Continued from Page 1)

II. By its *Declaration of Protest and Confession* the St. Louis faculty majority has accused the Missouri Synod of violating the *sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone) principle of the Reformation when Synod adopted the *Statement*. This elevates tradition above Scripture, they say. They also accuse Synod of judging them to be doctrinally unsound by the *Statement* rather than by Scripture, a charge that is untrue. The fear underlying these false and groundless accusations is that the *Statement*, unlike other synodically adopted doctrinal declarations, is being somehow elevated to the level of the Lutheran Confessions or even above them.

What about these incredible charges which ELIM is now also mimicing?

To make my point let's go back again to the *Mission Affirmations* and their re adoption at the New Orleans Convention. Notice the double standard, the inconsistency of those who opposed the adoption of the *Statement*. In every case those delegates at New Orleans who for any reason at all spoke or voted against the *Statement* voted for reaffirming "our subscription" (sic) to the *Mission Affirmations*—I say in every case because there were no negative votes to Resolution 1-06 (See New Orleans Proceedings, p.32a). True, this reaffirmation is somewhat hidden in a larger omnibus resolution to "Reaffirm our Church's Mission." And Committee 2 of the convention (Resolution 2-35) had prepared a resolution for the convention, urging the CTCR to complete a new study of the Mission of the Church which might have supplanted the *Mission Affirmations*, a resolution which, like so many others, never reached the convention floor. Nevertheless, the fact remains that those, whether present at New Orleans or absent, who opposed the adoption of the *Statement* and conjured up all kinds of Confessional arguments for their opposition are not at all opposed to subscribing to other doctrinal statements—as long as they like the statements.

And they are not opposed to implementing them either. For example, in a recent report entitled *Theological Education for Today*, prepared for the Board for Higher Education of the LCMS in 1970 and accepted by the St. Louis faculty the statement is made, "All agencies in the synod involved in the training of candidates for the ministry ought to recognize the necessity of implementing the *Detroit Mission Affirmations* in the actual training programs of the seminaries" (p.29). How's that for implementation! Think of the hue and cry that would rise from the faculty majority at St. Louis and our ELIM friends if such implementation were proposed for the *Statement* in the training of young men for the ministry!

A similar argument against the adoption of the *Statement* has found expression in the fear, voiced by opponents of the *Statement*, that some board or official in Synod might possibly require synodical teachers or others to subscribe to the *Statement*. This would be a legalistic misuse of the *Statement*, it is argued. But would it? We grant that such a fear in some circumstances would be well founded. After all, who wants to sign something he doesn't believe. But granting this, there is certainly nothing wrong in signing a doctrinal statement *per se*. There was nothing legalistic or sinister about thousands and thousands of loyal Missourians before New Orleans subscribing the *Statement* in order to demonstrate their solidarity with the synod's historic doctrinal position.

The St. Louis faculty majority sees nothing wrong in such conduct. Members of the faculty have been asked—I will not say pressured—to subscribe several doctrinal statements during the past four years (e.g. *Faithful to our Calling, Faithful to our Lord*; the *Declaration of Protest and Confession*) and have done so. On an earlier occasion when

declined to subscribe a statement we were summarily requested by the seminary president to give reasons forthwith. That's how important subscription to doctrinal statement has been at Concordia Seminary from time to time.

No, signing a doctrinal statement is not legalistic or un-Lutheran or wrong, if the statement is Scriptural and Confessional.

As a matter of fact, neither the *Mission Affirmations* nor the *Statement* are being exalted to the level of the Scriptures or our Confessions by anyone. Resolution 3-01 explicitly classifies the *Statement* along with Walther's "Thirteen Theses" with writings other than Scripture and the Confessions and then quotes the Formula of Concord (*Solid Declaration*, Summary 10, "if (wofern) they are in accord with the aforementioned pattern of doctrine (The Lutheran Confessions) they are to be accepted and used as helpful expositions and explanations." Resolution 3-01 defies misunderstanding on this point.

So the charge that New Orleans elevated the *Statement* to the level of the Confessions or elevated tradition above Scripture is a ruse, a transparent, phoney ruse, unworthy of those who would engage in serious debate.

III. And this leads me to the third objection to the *Statement*, the only objection that really counts, namely that the theology of the *Statement* is contrary to Scripture or the Confessions.

Although a few critics of the *Statement* seriously studied and criticized it prior to the New Orleans Convention, the professors at St. Louis and most of those who were unsympathetic to it were able to offer no useful or responsible reaction to the *Statement*. It was difficult, perhaps impossible, for anything issuing from the office of the synodical president who had presumed to investigate the theology of the *Statement* to receive a sympathetic hearing or discussion of the *Statement*. Now after New Orleans certain professors and others have apparently given more serious consideration to the *Statement* and have sent their reactions and criticisms to the Commission on Theology and Church Relations for consideration according to synodical protocol (New Orleans Proceedings, p.127), although some who think they find false doctrine in the *Statement* are advertising their belated analyses to the public, contrary to the accepted protocol.

In brief this criticism of the theology of the *Statement* centers in that charge that it is inadequate, that it does not deal sufficiently with basic Biblical themes. Since we do not have at hand these studies and critical analyses which have been sent to the CTCR, we cannot assess their validity. We can only point out that according to certain criteria inadequacies can be found even in some of our Lutheran Confessions (e.g. the Creeds and the Small Catechism which do not mention justification by faith) without necessarily faulting the theology of these confessions.

Such critical studies are however finally getting to the heart of the matter. For the problem in our synod, the real issue between the St. Louis seminary faculty and the Synod centering in their respective rejection and adoption of the *Statement*, is not a constitutional one and does not center in the status of synodically adopted doctrinal statements and how they will be used. The real issue is doctrinal. Or, as the president of the synod has said: we, a confessional church, have two theologies among us, one that reflects our historic and consistent understanding of what Scripture and our Confessions teach on certain crucial matters (See New Orleans Proceedings, Resolution 3-09) and another than does not. The St. Louis faculty majority agrees with this judgment in their rejection of the *Statement* (April 1972), in their endorsement of Dr. Tietjen's rejection of the theology of the president of Synod and his fact finding committee (*Fact Finding or Fault Finding*), and in their more

## 'I Have A Dream'

IN the last ten years or so, the system of higher education in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has been pulled apart by the controversies which have ripped through the synod. One of the claims to fame of the Missouri Synod among Protestant denominations was its comprehensive system of education which literally covered everything, from nursery school, right up through the grades and high school and then finally to college and seminary. For those who still wanted more education there was even a department of graduate studies. Encyclopedias in discussing American Lutheranism call attention to Missouri's educational system, and rightfully so. This system was never intended to be autonomous, but these schools were established primarily, and we could add, only, for assuring a steady source of pastors and teachers trained in the word of God and faithful to the Lutheran Confessions. Those training for secular vocations or occupations were admitted into these schools, but still the original intent of the synod in preparing pastors and teachers must be the chief goal.

It is not really startling that the current doctrinal strife which has been simmering in the synod for a generation should break out in a blaze in the synod's colleges and seminaries — after all these schools were its jewels which attracted outside attention. Whoever controlled the schools really controlled the synod, because here virtually all of its future leaders were trained.

The traumatic year of 1969 when the conservative and confessional elements in the Missouri Synod expressed themselves forcefully in the election of Dr. Preus as president was marked by a turnover of administrations at the synod's seminaries in St. Louis and Springfield, both of which had become vacant within weeks of each other. History looks as if it is repeating itself in 1973, the year in which Dr. Preus stood successfully for reelection. At this time it looks as if there are going to be new administrations again at both seminaries.

ONLY in recent years have the outspoken conservative elements in the synod taken an interest in the running and administering of its schools. Now conservatives have become suddenly alert to the fact that Confessional Lutheranism with its strong commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and its total reliance on the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures as being the true and only authoritative word of God can only survive in the Missouri Synod if this is daily and regularly taught in all of its schools. In fact there is no other reason for which our schools exist.

The "spirit of New Orleans" has expressed itself in the election of Dr. Paul Zimmerman as president of our teachers college in River Forest. His election as president over the protest of the faculty majority shows that the invisible tension caused by theological differences is becoming increasingly more visible. Within a short time, it now seems, new presidents will have been installed at St. Louis, Springfield, River Forest, and Ann Arbor. Ft. Wayne will offer another opportunity very soon. If you take a map, you can draw a continuous line from St. Louis to Springfield to River Forest to Ft. Wayne and then to Ann Arbor, right through heart and nerve center of the Missouri Synod. You can look at it like a line of defense; it might be better to look at it like a map of future opportunities.

IN this case future opportunities might mean turning back the clock several years. Now one knows that you cannot really turn back the clock. Today's students should not be forced into molds of previous generations. Still these students can be brought up

on the theology which was Missouri's strength for so many years and through which God brought her blessings, not the least of which was doctrinal unity and brotherly harmony.

"I have a dream." It is a dream about the past, but it is a dream which can set a pattern for the future. It will mean the reintroduction of a spirit of cooperation instead of competition among the schools. It will be a pooling of our educational resources to attain the one important goal of the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus. It will be the beginning of that dream of the past when our synod can become again that kind of a church which has enough resources to establish mission congregations at home and abroad.

Yes, it's a dream, a dream freighted down with the nostalgia of Missouri, which we can not only remember, but for which we can now hope. The keys to this hope rests in our schools and the keys to our schools rests in its new presidents. These schools, all of them, still belong to the people who established them. Congregations, concerned about the outcome of New Orleans, can not be less concerned about the leaders who are going to be chosen shortly for our seminaries and colleges. Our congregations have an avenue of expressing themselves through nominations. The confessional Lutheran movement which expressed itself at New Orleans will not fail to express itself in the choice of its next educational leaders. There is too much at stake not to.

Dr. David P. Scaer  
Concordia Seminary  
Springfield, Illinois

## Dr. Paul Zimmerman

In electing Dr. Paul Zimmerman to the presidency of Concordia Teachers College, River Forest the electors made the best possible choice for the position; they are to be congratulated for their good sense. Dr. Zimmerman combines several qualities that will help to lead the school along the path of the finest academic and theological tradition of the Missouri Synod. He is an excellent administrator with depth of experience and background exceeded by no one in the synod. From Seward and Ann Arbor former students and faculty members speak of him with the highest respect and fondness for him as both administrator and leader. Zimmerman is furthermore a good theologian, an indispensable requisite in a president of a Lutheran teachers' college. He has kept abreast of the theological issues facing the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, his numerous articles and books indicate this. His chairmanship of President Preus' investigation committee of the St. Louis Seminary also showed Dr. Zimmerman a scrupulously fair and honest person as well as an acute theologian aware of what is going on in today's theological world.

Dr. Zimmerman, we believe, will give heed to the desires and will of those who have called him. He will be a good leader and president of Synod's largest teachers' college. We wish him God's rich blessing in his new work!

# Tri-Lutheranism

ONE of the unfortunate consequences of the long, drawn out debates on certain issues at the New Orleans Convention was the loss of opportunity to discuss other equally important resolutions. One of those which did not get on the floor for debate and action dealt with the Tri-Lutheran Campus Ministry.

This issue is important today because there is the danger that those involved in campus ministries might, in their enthusiasm, practice altar and pulpit fellowship with members of church bodies where no formal fellowship agreement exists. This disregard for synodical fellowship principles is also occasionally seen in joint festive worship services, such as Reformation Day Rallies.

We believe that the resolution which Committee Two proposed speaks so clearly to this issue that we are reprinting it in its entirety, as found on page 121 of the Convention Proceedings. Certain portions which we feel are very pertinent have been italicized.

We would urge that: (1) the Board of Directors direct that the various Resolves be carried out; (2) responsible District and Board for Mission officials act in accordance with the third Resolve; (3) known violations be reported to the District President responsible and also to the Board for Missions; and (4) those engaged in campus work or in the planning of joint rallies, in the interest of peace and unity, abide by the constitution of Synod and its past resolutions, as outlined in the various Whereas's:

## TO REAFFIRM THE SYNOD'S POSITION REGARDING TRI-LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY RESOLUTION 2-37

Overtures 2-98A through 2-101 (CW, pp. 75-77)

WHEREAS, The 1969 synodical convention (Cf. Res. 2-26, 1969 *Proceedings*, p. 90) expressed the Synod's position that "joint sponsorship or participation in matters not directly affecting the Synod's doctrinal position (cooperation in externals) is not only possible but desirable *when this can be done without compromising the faith or confession of the church* (Cf. "Theology of Fellowship," Part Three, C, 4); and

WHEREAS, Members and agencies of the Synod are presently participating with other Lutherans in many such activities and programs at various levels of the church's life; and

WHEREAS, The members of the Synod have voluntarily united in a fraternal agreement to determine fellowship relations with other church bodies or congregations, *not individually, but through convention action* (Cf. Bylaws 1.21); and

WHEREAS, The Synod has urged all its members to refrain from exercising local option either on a District or on a congregational level in regard to fellowship (Res. 2-18, 1967 *Proceedings*, p. 92); and

WHEREAS, Past conventions of the Synod have provided for consultative and coordinative planning with other Lutherans on matters pertaining to campus ministries (Cf. Res. 320, 1967 *Proceedings*, pp. 101-102; Res. 1-20, 1969 *Proceedings*, p. 82), but has not authorized any activities that would violate the Synod's fellowship principles or its policies with regard to unionistic practices (Cf. Constitution, Article VI); and

WHEREAS, Our Synod has directed its Districts to exercise considerable leadership in the planning and development of campus ministry programs, but has not authorized its Districts to disregard any synodical fellowship principles or policies; therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the Synod reiterate its desire for consultative and coordinative planning with other Lutherans in the development of campus ministry programs; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Synod reaffirm its position that the achievement of doctrinal agreement and the subsequent synodical establishment of fellowship must precede joint involvement with other Christians in matters directly pertaining to the ministry of Word and Sacrament or directly affecting the doctrinal position of the Synod; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Synod ask its Board for Missions and its various District boards and officials responsible for campus ministry programs to discharge their responsibilities with due regard for the distinction between such joint activities, funding, and administration which can be carried out without the prior establishment of fellowship (*cooperation in externals*) and those which should properly follow the synodical establishment of fellowship (*cooperation in internals*); and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Synod's Board for Missions examine the current campus ministry practices of all synodical Districts in terms of the above distinction and make recommendations to the 1975 synodical convention for any action which may be necessary to insure that the Synod's fellowship principles and policies are being observed; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Synod urge all those involved in these matters to attempt to work out any differences of interpretation or opinion about specific activities with true Christian charity and fraternity, and *with sincere regard for the cause of the Gospel of Jesus Christ*; and be it finally

*Resolved*, That the Commission on Theology and Church Relations be urged to give the highest priority to its present study of the Synod's church relations policies and principles, and that this study include practical guidelines for the implementation of the Synod's church relations policies in those areas of its work which may be carried out jointly with other Christians.

Richard G. Korthals  
Arcadia, Michigan

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## What Is Really Meant By 'Gospel Freedom'?

IN the Lutheran literature that has appeared since the election of Dr. J. A. O. Preus at Denver in 1969 and especially both before and after the New Orleans Convention a great deal has been made about the fact that the "freedom of the Gospel," the "freedom in Christ" that Christians have was being infringed upon and even abrogated by those who insisted that the traditional synodical doctrinal stance should be adhered to by those who were members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Those who have been advocating that all the teachings of the Holy Scripture must be believed and adhered to, even though some might not be classified as fundamental teachings, whose knowledge is not necessary for salvation, have been and are being labelled as legalistic in their demands; yes, they are accused of limiting for the average pastor and layman in synod his liberty in Christ. Freedom of the Gospel, it is claimed, allows for the use of the Historical-Critical Method which questions the reliability of God's Word and permits finding errors, mistakes and all manner of inconsistencies in both Testaments. Those who insist that the synod teach, preach and practice in harmony with all Biblical teaching are accused of placing a yoke upon the synodical membership and thus are foisting on all in synod a type of religious bondage from which they have been freed under the Gospel.

Under the term "Gospel-freedom" scholars, pastors and laymen in the Lutheran Church and in other Christian denominations are justifying teachings and practices forbidden by God in His Word. "Liberty in Christ" has become the slogan by means of which all manner of doctrinal and ethical aberrations are justified. Thus it is argued that the teachings of evolution may be accepted because the theory that man developed from the primates, or from an animal from which man and primates were descended, are not wrong because they do not militate against the Law-Gospel dichotomy, as long as evolutionary teaching does not contradict the fact that God acts in judgment and grace toward men. A statement such as Exodus 20:11, where it is said that in six days God created the heavens and the earth and on the seventh he rested, need not be accepted as true and factual.

TODAY there appears to be a loose view taken about the matter of divorce. Pastors are no longer concerned to tell their members the Biblical doctrine concerning divorce. It is now argued that obtaining an unscriptural divorce does not militate against the Gospel. Allowing women to serve as pastors of congregations is becoming practice in American Lutheranism. In the Lutheran seminaries a considerable number of women are preparing for ordination to the Lutheran ministry. Freedom in the Gospel permits women to hold the pastoral office and administer the sacraments, so it is claimed, a position we are told does not militate against the Gospel. Yet the Scriptures clearly forbid women from serving as pastors of congregations (I Cor. 14:33-36; I Tim. 2:11-13). Again the liberty that the Christian has in Christ is said to permit the practice of homosexuality as well as condoning it. And yet Paul in Romans 1 condemns this practice in the severest of terms: "For this reason God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves" (v. 24). "For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women ex-

changed natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another" (vv. 26, 27). Those who quote Paul against these sexual aberrations are accused of being guilty of legalism.

Since the concepts of "Christian liberty," "freedom of the Gospel," "Gospel oriented" are being employed against those who defend the importance of accepting all revealed truths in the Scriptures as binding and not just the Law-Gospel principle, it is important that these concepts should be examined in their Biblical usage and in their New Testament context. Paul's Letter to the Galatians, called by one Biblical scholar "The Magna Charta of Christian Liberty," deals with "freedom in Christ," with "Christian liberty" versus a wrong kind of legalism. Galatians was one of Luther's favorite New Testament books, because in its chapters the true way of salvation was set forth. Through the study of Galatians and Romans Luther found peace of conscience and came to understand the true meaning of Christian liberty and wherein legalism consisted.

PAUL wrote the Epistle to the Galatians because of a serious controversy that had developed within less than twenty years after Christ's ascension. Men from Judea, who were followers of Christ, had come to the congregations of Galatia and taught: "Unless you are circumcized you cannot be saved." In addition to accepting the teaching concerning Christ's atoning death and being justified by acceptance of what Christ had accomplished on mankind's behalf, these Jewish Christians insisted that the ceremonial law be kept by non-Jewish Christians. They for instance insisted that Paul's coworker Titus, a Gentile, be circumcized. Circumcision, the laws about clean and unclean foods and the many other pentateuchal regulations needed to be observed as necessary for salvation. The answer Paul gave the Philippian jailor, when the latter asked, "What must I do to be saved"? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou and thy house shall be saved" was considered insufficient and incomplete.

The Judaizers were placing a yoke upon the Galatian Gentile Christians by teaching them to adopt and conform to many ceremonial laws of the Old Testament in addition to believing in Jesus Christ as their Redeemer. By insisting on this addition for the Gentiles, the Judaizers were detracting from Christ's work of redemption, who willingly had placed Himself under the law, kept it perfectly and also suffered the punishment mankind deserved for failure to live according to its demands. By His successful ministry and victorious death, the ceremonial law which served as a pedagogue to prepare people for Christ, has been abolished. All men, Jew and Gentile, were freed from the need to keep the Sabbath, new moons and other requirements concerning clean and unclean. The message that Paul proclaimed announced freedom from the need of practicing the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament. To the Colossian Christians Paul wrote: "Therefore suffer no one to sit in judgment on you as to eating or drinking or with regard to a festival, a new moon, or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of things that

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## Statement . . .

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which seems to follow the leadership in the faculty majority on all major points agrees.

SO the issue is doctrinal. What then do we do about the *Statement* in the present situation? Do we forget about it, even though we have adopted it, because the St. Louis faculty majority and others just do not like it and do not agree with it? Do we refrain from implementing it because the faculty majority at St. Louis is now likened to a beleaguered minority, threatened in their belief and deep convictions by a totalitarian document called the *Statement*?

No. Let us implement the *Statement* at least for the purpose it was originally intended. The president of the synod originally asked the Board of Control of the seminary to employ the *Statement* as they assessed the theology of each faculty member on crucial theological issues. There is nothing unreasonable or legalistic about that. Even the papist theologians at Augsburg in 1530, as much as they despised the evangelical doctrine of the Lutherans, did not just reject the Augsburg Confessions out of hand and in generalities without any serious study, but replied to it in a detailed way. Let the St. Louis faculty now respond, man for man, frankly and honestly, to each thesis and antitheses of the *Statement* so that the church, including their ELIM followers, can know exactly where they stand. Almost everyone else has responded, boards, commissions, hundreds and thousands of people, the synod itself. Why not the faculty?

And there is something else we can all do, something even more important by way of implementing the *Statement*. We can all continue to study it, adopt it in our congregations and other groups, rally around it as an honest, clear and straight forward expression of our deepest convictions on the matters that trouble our synod. We can defend the *Statement* and refuse to be intimidated or throttled or fooled when unjust and strident cries of legalism and sectarianism are voiced against us and the Synod for adopting the *Statement*. We can call to mind, above all the sentimental clamor and claptrap which obscure the issue, that confessing our faith is the highest worship of God, the noblest hallowing of His name; and this is done in the *Statement* which on the points it touches teaches the Word of God in its truth and purity and is a good statement for our day.

Dr. Robert Preus  
Concordia Seminary  
St. Louis, Missouri

## Participative Democracy

Our synod's church polity provides adequate representation for her membership in the deliberative assemblies authorized by the Constitution to make the basic decisions for the synod. It is one of the few church bodies that has structured itself in the form of a thoroughly participative democracy.

But such a church structure also requires an uncommon vigilance. If one analysis of the New Orleans Convention is correct, the liberal minority, representing only about ten per cent of the church, was able to field about forty per cent of the delegates to that convention—far out of proportion to their actual strength in the church.

With district conventions in the offing, it is important that congregations make sure they are adequately represented and that their delegates reflect the majority opinion of their congregations. Make sure you choose a delegate who will represent your theological position, even if it means volunteering yourself to represent your congregation! This is just as important at the district convention level as it is at synodical conventions. And the time to be thinking about your representation is now!

## Freedom . . .

(Continued from Page 5)

were to come, but the substance belongs to Christ" (Weymouth translation of Col. 2:16-17). The Philippians were also troubled by these Judaizers and Paul warns them: "Beware of the dogs, the dishonest workmen, the self-mutilators. For we are the true circumcision—we who render to God a spiritual worship and make our boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in outward ceremonies" (Phil. 3:3).

By insisting on additional religious rites by the Judaizers the Galatian Christians were having their freedom in Christ taken away and instead were being placed under an unnecessary bondage. The Judaizers were legalists because they placed upon Christian Gentiles obligations and rites no longer demanded of them, laws which Christ's death and resurrection had abrogated. A legalist is a person who burdens men's consciences with beliefs and practices that God's Word has not commanded to be taught and believed. However, freedom in Christ, freedom in the Gospel cannot be used to deny Biblical teachings in the Scripture that God had given and not abrogated.

"Gospel-oriented" refers especially to the method of salvation, that a man is justified by faith in Christ without the deeds of the law. The moral law of God has not been set aside. The law needs to be preached so that people repent of their sins, as a preparation for the comforting message of the Gospel. Even the converted believer needs to hear the Law. The Law further will serve as a guide as to what are God-pleasing works. Christian liberty does not permit ignoring the many instructions that the converted Christian is to follow given for man to practice as a redeemed person living in harmony with God's will.

Dr. Raymond F. Surburg  
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Springfield, Illinois

## Balance Is Sponsor

Every issue of *Affirm* contains the following description: "Affirm, sponsored by Balance, Inc., is published monthly or more frequently by a group of its members concerned about the theological and related developments in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod." Since Balance, Inc. which sponsors *Affirm* has maintained a low profile during its few years of existence, the editor of *Affirm* has requested me as president of Balance, Inc. to say something about it.

Balance, Inc. was incorporated in February, 1970 with four laymen and three pastors as its first trustees. It was founded as a charitable corporation to publish religious literature, to promote Biblical religion and to improve communications between churches and their members. It operates exclusively for religious, educational, or charitable purposes. For these purposes it has raised money on a limited scale from interested and sympathetic parties, never on any church-wide basis. The chief enterprise of Balance, Inc. has been the monthly magazine, *Affirm*. The editorial staff of *Affirm* was chosen by Balance, Inc. and the responsibility for the contents of *Affirm* are placed entirely in the hands of the editorial staff. I think I speak for all the officers and trustees of Balance, Inc. when I say that we are highly pleased with the sober, timely, responsible, evangelical and Lutheran note which has been reached consistently by *Affirm*.

Dr. Robert Preus



## We Do Respect Dissent

IT is being claimed that some of the resolutions of the New Orleans Convention (Cf. 3-01, 3-09, 2-12, etc.) are unconstitutional and therefore Synod's members have a right to dissent from them, and that, if Synod were not to allow such dissent, she would unduly bind a member's conscience. You should know that Synod has not prohibited dissent, but has rather suggested proper ways to express it and proper channels for dissenters to follow.

### *Resolutions Are Constitutional*

First, let it be pointed out that the resolutions New Orleans passed are not unconstitutional. Anyone who has taken the trouble to read them will know that the resolutions themselves, together with their preambles, make a very logical and carefully reasoned case for their constitutionality. They carefully outline the historical precedents for such actions, precedents that go back throughout the history of our synod and all the way back to the time of the *Apology to the Augsburg Confession*. It would almost seem that persons making charges of unconstitutionality against them must have not read the resolutions themselves. I would urge the reader to verify this by obtaining a copy of those resolutions and reading them for himself, instead of taking someone else's word for it.

### *Proper Channels of Dissent*

But what are the constitutional rights of a member who does not agree with a doctrinal resolution? Synod has officially addressed herself to that question repeatedly over the last 15 years. The procedures suggested by the by-laws of Synod and by synodical resolutions are these:

1. Such dissenters are "to test their findings and opinions with their peer groups . . . and refrain from disseminating doctrinal opinions in such a manner and in such situations as will cause confusion and offense in the church." (Resolution 2-08, Detroit Convention, 1965.)
2. Such dissenters are "to present their concerns to the Commission on Theology and Church Relations." (Resolution 3-19, Cleveland Convention, 1962.)
3. Where disagreement persists, they are to bring their concerns to the appropriate synodical officials — circuit counsellor, district president, the synodical praesidium. (Resolution 3-11, San Francisco Convention, 1959.)
4. And finally, they may challenge a doctrinal resolution by an overture to a convention.

In summary, let me quote a by-law from Synod's constitution (1.09f) on this subject: "If such resolutions are of a doctrinal nature, dissent is to be expressed first within the fellowship of peers, then brought to the attention of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations before finding expression as an overture to the convention calling for revision or rescision."

### *Improper Channels of Dissent*

Now, on the basis of these formally prescribed procedures and channels for dissent, it seems obvious that the kind of dissent expressed in some of the "moderate" or liberal journals is not in keeping with the procedure Synod has established for her members. The organized "screaming" of some of the dissenters, the organized demonstrations at and since the New Orleans Convention, the organized junkets of Seminary

professors all over the country, the organized misrepresentations so often directed at the officers of Synod from many quarters since the Denver Convention, the steady barrage of leaks to the secular press of confidential materials — all of this hardly is in keeping with the procedures for dissent spelled out by Synod in her by-laws and in her formal resolutions. Dissent can be expressed in a respectful or in a disrespectful manner, in a gentlemanly or in a churlish way. Much of the dissent we have seen displays contempt rather than respect.

### *Dissent from God's Word?*

In searching for explanations for the great rash of disrespectful dissent so much in evidence in recent years, a nagging and nebulous theory has been haunting us. Let me throw it out for what it's worth. We live in an age of world-wide revolutionary movements, spawned by the rapid social changes taking place all over. Will Oursler refers to this as the "new lawlessness," which seems to want to reject anything which any previous generation accepted, which wants to erect a new politics, a new economics, new social structures, new ethical codes, new sexual morality, and which wants to insist that every person be free to do his own thing even if it brings anarchy, destruction and burning down of sections of our cities. Could the malaise of the "new lawlessness" have any relation at all to the malaise of a proposed "new theology" in our synod? If so, I think we should repeatedly remind ourselves of the fact that no Christian has a right to dissent from the Word of God.

The Rev. Marcus T. Lang, Pastor  
St. James Lutheran Church  
LaFayette, Indiana

### **Editorial Policy**

While the articles in *Affirm* with their applications to contemporary events rest on Biblical truths, they do not necessarily in all their details represent the views of The Editorial Group. Any divergence of opinion, however, falls within the latitude allowed by Article II of the Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

For *Affirm* is unashamedly dedicated to preserving, under grace, Missouri's priceless theological heritage, based on the Word and set forth in the Book of Concord, as both have been commonly understood in Missouri until the most recent times.

### **Contributions**

With their generous support many of its friends have made the publication of *Affirm* possible.

You also can help defray its cost by contributing in any amount to:

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# Restoring Synodical Control

THE St. Louis Seminary Board of Control, with a 6-5 conservative majority as a result of the New Orleans convention elections, took the first positive steps at its November meeting toward restoring synodical control over the school which pretty well has been a law unto itself for the last few years.

The Board's meetings since August have been occupied with clearing away procedural underbrush and obtaining interpretive rulings from Synod's Commission on Constitutional Matters regarding the New Orleans-adopted by-laws (6.79, Proceedings, pp. 130-131) which spell out procedure for the Board's supervision of the faculty. Since termination of debate requires an unobtainable two-thirds vote, the liberal minority has made unblushing and blatant use of parliamentary delay tactics and almost endless discussions in order to stall and delay Board action.

However, at the November 19th meeting, in a stormy 10-hour session lasting almost to midnight, the Board adopted eight resolutions which must certainly hearten God's people as the Board responded to Synod's clear New Orleans directions that the school's teaching and administration be brought back into harmony with Synod's theological position.

The far-ranging Board resolutions include the following:

- Seminary President John Tietjen is to explain to the Board in writing how he reconciles his position as seminary president under synodical policies with such recent actions of his as participation in the July faculty protest, his involvement in Evangelical Lutherans in Mission (ELIM), his granting permission for a week's absence to 15 professors who stumped the country on behalf of ELIM, a lack of faculty response to the convention Resolution 3-09 which strongly criticized the doctrinal position of the faculty majority, and his participation without Board knowledge and consent in the Fund for Lutheran Theological Education (FLUTE).

- The Board declined to renew Prof. Paul Goetting's teaching contract beyond its June 1974 expiration date.

- Noting a large number of guest lecturers slated to teach in the winter quarter, the Board reserved for itself individual approval of all non-regular faculty teaching contracts and is requiring the academic dean to supply a list of all guest lecturers as well as a list of all full-time academic positions currently filled or unfilled.

- The Board will review all syllabi (course outlines) and is requiring from professors a written statement as to how they "propose to deal with such matters" in those courses that touch on the New Orleans resolutions which deal with "A Statement" (3-01) and the condemnation of the faculty majority's position (3-09).

- In dealing with the charges against the seminary president by two pastors, the Board took the next step (by-law 6.79b) and directed the Board chairman to "attempt to deal with the matter." A report is expected in the December 17th meeting.

- All professors, upon reaching age 65, will be considered for either full-time continuation, modified service, or retirement.

- Dr. Ralph Bohlman's faculty status and leave of absence were continued.

- A 69-page appeal was filed with the American Association of Theological Schools regarding that agency's seminary accreditation probation.

## Affirm

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Volume III, No. 8

January, 1974

 "I believed,  
 and therefore have  
 I spoken"  
 2 Cor. 4:13

## The Tietjen Suspension

FOR more than a decade events at the Sem had been building to the Tietjen suspension. Years before Dr. Tietjen took over the school's presidency Missouri had started to grow aware of the fact that its faculty harbored theological deviants, who wanted to lead the church away from its traditional theology, based on the Word, to a liberal theology in conflict with its Lutheran heritage.

The last four years a number of events speeded the crisis the Sem's Board of Control recently faced. The Preus election at Denver enabled the conservatives to recapture some of their strength in the church's structure. As much as possible they consolidated that strength during the first four-year term of Preus.

Moreover, the new president took the initiative in restoring theological order in Missouri with two critical decisions: he created the Fact-Finding Committee, which at long last gave the church an opportunity to judge for itself the reliability of the persistent rumors about the Sem's faculty. When the Committee's report had been made, President Preus also issued *A Statement* to serve as a guide to the teachings Missouri had traditionally held, on the basis of God's Word, concerning the doctrines now obviously in controversy.

That set the stage for New Orleans. There the church responded to developments by giving conservatives a sweeping election victory and by reaffirming its right to pass doctrinal resolutions to meet its critical needs in its struggle. It also condemned the St. Louis faculty's majority and its president.

After New Orleans the school's Board of Control had no options but to act in accordance with the synod's decision. Their action, the climax to more than ten years of discussion, rumor, evaluation, and intense feeling, suspended Dr. Tietjen from the Sem's presidency.

ALL future events at the Sem will be ramifications of this basic decision and responses to it. As this is written, it is not yet clear how matters will fall out. It may be that under God the Sem will have to pass through difficult days. But there can now be no turning back, and by the mercy of God the situation at the Sem will soon right itself.

The press, with its need to simplify news, has pictured Missouri's struggle as one between two men: Preus and Tietjen. In a limited way this simplification is true—but only in a most limited way. These two men serve only as symbols of the broader struggle—between Missouri's conservatives and her more liberally-inclined members. In the broadest sense, Preus and Tietjen serve as symbols of a great struggle of ideas—in the church and the world at large.

Preus carries on Missouri's traditional idea, embodied in

her constitution and by-laws, that a church body is a group of people banded together with the same common faith; they form a synod to preserve this faith by strengthening each other and by carrying out common educational and mission enterprises.

No conservative Missourian denies the liberal the right to his liberalism, no matter how deeply he believes the liberal to be in error and how much it grieves him. *But he does deny the liberal the right to be liberal within Missouri.* He does insist that Missouri was founded by conservatives, maintained through all its history by conservatives, and that these conservatives even now have the right to maintain their church body as they want it maintained.

A NUMBER of things seem to be almost generally true about Missouri's conservatives and their leaders:

They regret that the church has had to pass through its present trial, which has not been of their making, at the same time that they accept this stormy passage as a part of God's will.

They have not and do not express themselves with any rancor against those who have held opposing views; like Christian men they firmly stand fast on God's Word, but they also love those with other views and pray for their welfare.

Except for a handful of leaders, who may possess the essential facts, conservatives regard it a part of wisdom to wait for a fuller disclosure of the events in the Seminary case; they have the confidence that words like "malfeasance" have not been carelessly used.

And they hope, with real fervor, that the church can now begin to think of its primary work in the world. That with this crisis behind it (knowing that much still remains to be done in the Sem and in other areas of church life to reaffirm God's Word), Missouri can think in terms of rebuilding the Seminary so that it will again prepare men, in the way in which it did during most of its history, for the Christian ministry.

With that behind her, Missouri can turn her energies to the mission work for which she won a great reputation especially during the last generation and which God blessed richly as thousands upon thousands of people around the world through her witness found life everlasting in Christ Jesus.

The struggle is not over—make no mistake about that!

But at the same time, Missouri can thank God that He has by grace again brought her as far as He has!

And Missourians can ask God to continue to bless their work so that the church will witness to Christ as Lord and Redeemer with the clarity and winsomeness and power which have marked so much of her history!